

THE TRUE
SPIRITUAL RELIGION,
OF DELIGHTFUL
SERVICE of the LORD,
WITH FEAR,
SOLELY DUE AND ACCEPTABLE
UNTO THE MOST
HOLY and GLORIOUS GOD,
AS
Distinguished from Idolatrous HEATHENISM, Legal
JUDAISM, and Lofty PHARISAISM;
In two DISCOURSES,
On the Address of CHRIST'S MINISTERS,
TO
The ENEMIES of his KINGDOM.

PSALM II. 11. "Serve the LORD with Fear, and rejoice with trembling."

Proposed to the lowest Capacities, and designed for the Discovery, Abashment and Reformation, on the one Hand, of all those that are equally guilty of Idolatry, Formality and Hypocrisy, worshipping the Image of themselves, instead of a supreme, infinite, amiable and perfect Being.— And for the Edification, Joy, Comfort and Revival, on the other Hand, of all serious and religious Christians.

To which is ADDED,

A Discourse upon the true and unfeigned Repentance of JOB, after the Manifestation of GOD's glorious Majesty, and Answer unto him out of the Whirlwind, JOB xlii. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee, by the Hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*

By LAMBERTUS DE RONDE, A
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Lam. iii. 40. *Let us search and try our Ways, and turn again unto the LORD.*

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P R E F A C E.

HAS the true service of God ever been a matter of necessity to be treated of? It is in this age in which we live, and considered in its most general view, is so scandalously neglected: for tho' religion be a thing that all men naturally agree in, yet there is nothing concerning which, the opinions of people vary so much, as about the particular acts and real exercise of it; and nothing which is less practised, than that religion wherein the glorious God can be magnified. Alas! Shall I mention those, who are bold enough to speak perverse things?—As if a man, whatever were his opinions, provided he was sincere in them, and walked conscientiously according to them, was in a state of safety; not observing, the doctrinal points the apostle urged in his epistles, and the emphasis he uses when he saith,

If

If an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel, let him be accursed; and that there is salvation in no name, but that of Jesus;—except reason will prove the contrary: While a man cannot practice genuine religion, without having those apprehensions of it, which are agreeable to that religion, which alone is acceptable to God.—Or shall I speak of those who live without God in the world, indulging themselves in their lusts? As if the way of approving themselves members of the church, were to drink, swear, be lewd and destitute of shame, to commit all kinds of sin openly.—Or of those, who behave themselves in such a manner, as if religion consisted in the thriving of parties, the strengthening of factions, the advancement of any particular interest, and the professing of the world to the profession of external Christianity, joined with an evangelical complexion; instead of real faith, humility, self-denial, contempt of this world, pure obedience to God,
and

and sincere benevolence to men?—Or, when we view the conduct even of those, who pretend to be extraordinarily religious, yea pleasing themselves in their own fancy, that they are more religious than their neighbours; where doth the true spiritual religion, which alone will be pleasing to God, prevail in the life of men? Indeed nominal worshippers are numerous enough, but real, there are few; for God, as the infinitely glorious and all-perfect Being, is out of view, there is no supreme love to him, no fear or reverence for his presence, no desire of his favours as the highest good, no faith in Christ, as it ought to be exercised, thereby to be as well delivered from the power of sin, as from the condemnation which we have incurred by it; to walk holy before God, with due reverence for, and sincere obedience to his word; but being averse from all that looks like holiness and virtue, a mere self-love lies at the bottom, seeking the favour of God from
no

no other motive, but fear of hell, or some desire of happiness; and not from a sense of the excellency of his glorious perfections, and the blessedness of his holy communion;—and whatever else may be amiable in those pretended Christians, religion dwells not in their breasts; nay, many there are, who think they serve God when they dishonour him, wresting his scriptures, corrupting his doctrine, opposing his ministers, seducing his people into error; and that, all for the promoting of some temporal interests or groundless opinions; *O tempora! O mores! O times! O manners!* Who that has not a heart like flint or adamant, would not lament in public, and mourn before God in secret, under a sense of this sad state of things; and sincerely desire to revive, under the divine assistance, the languishing cause of vital Christianity and substantial piety? It is this has engaged me to compose this treatise and communicate it to the *American* world, in that language which

which is more universally understood, in hopes that a great many, who have hitherto lived without, or but in an outward form of religion, may by divine grace be now awakened to the consideration of it, and be instructed in its true nature and importance. And those that are already experimentally acquainted with it, may be more enabled, by the blessed spirit, to make a farther progress.—If any are inclined to censure me, for troubling the world with a new discourse, upon a subject which has already been treated on by a great many famous divines ; they ought to consider, that it is my duty on that account, not to be discouraged, but with the same view, to join my endeavours with theirs, to stand in the gap, and stem the tide against so general an inundation of profaneness, hypocrisy and licentiousness, wherewith the greater part of the world is overflowed, and at this time the principles of religion secretly undermined and openly attacked ;

tacked; besides every man has his proper gift of God, and talent of preaching and writing, which by the divine blessing all-together, may prove the means of bringing souls to the knowledge of God in Christ, and obedience to the truth.—Should my style of writing give offence to some, because it is not in that species of the evangelical strain, with such soothing expressions as tend to please the ear, without awakening the conscience, but plain and free; I hope they will see their mistake, in choosing rather to be falsely deceived, than faithfully treated; and be kind enough to consider, that although that method of preaching and writing, which by some is called evangelical, in opposition to that which is legal, tends to recommend one necessary part of a minister's duty; nevertheless he is bound in conscience to urge the necessity and importance of performing moral duties, as well as that of faith, and relying on the promises of the gospel; being entrusted

entrusted with both, he ought seasonably to make use of the one as well as of the other.—First, because without the moral law, by which is *the knowledge of sin only*, (a) no sinner will be convinced of his misery; nor sensible of the infinite evil of sin, before we shew him the most perfect and just demand of the great Law-giver on the one hand, and the curse so justly threatened against the least transgression of it, on the other; whereby God's justice will appear, and *he is not unrighteous, who taketh vengeance.* (b)

Secondly, The necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, never by any minister can be justly recommended to the sinner, unless he first shews him by the law, his transgression; after his transgression, his guilt and defilement; after his guilt and defilement, his just condemnation; and thus the great importance of seeking his righteousness in a perfect Mediator: Or, as Paul saith, *Christ is the end of the law, for*

(a) Rom. vii. 7. (b) Rom. iii. 5.

for righteousness, to every one that believeth ; (c) consequently, we must be found in him only, not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ ; the righteousness which is of God, by faith. (d) And

Thirdly, Whilst we do not make void the law through faith, but rather establish it ; (e) and Christ came not to destroy the moral law, but to fulfil it ; (f) we, as ministers of Christ, are indispensably obliged, to urge a constant obedience to it, and recommend it to all Christians, as a rule of their lives, that they may regulate their conversation accordingly, and observe its precepts ;—yet not by their own power, but by faith in Christ, and the efficacious influence of his spirit ; nor to be justified by the works of the law,—God forbid ; but to evidence their obedience and true change, after the image of Christ as the fruits of

(c) Rom. x. 4. (d) Philip. iii. 9. (e) Rom. iii. 31.
(f) Matt. v. 17.

of faith ; to live holy before God, to love him for his intrinsic worth and excellency, in being what he is ; and to shew their gratitude for all his loving kindness, and special favours bestowed upon them, in Christ Jesus.—In this respect are the commandments of the law the same with those of the gospel ; for Christ has never given us an other command, than *to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as our selves* ; the performance thereof being the proper mark of his disciples, and the sum and substance of the whole law and the prophets. (*g*) Hence we see, that a sincere obedience to the law, is taken in the gospel as a fruit of the divine spirit, and rewarded with the choicest blessings of the great Law-giver, but its violation, threatened with the most dreadful of his punishments : (*h*) From this, the duty of a minister evidently appears ; as also that

(*g*) Matt. xxii. 37. 40. (*h*) Gal. vi. 16. Rom. ii. 5, 13.

that the reproach of *legal preaching*, imputed to such ministers as ascribe the glory of all good to God, but all cause of corruption and sin to themselves, is but a mere calumny; which commonly proceeds from those that have no distinct apprehensions of the word of God, nor can bear to be discovered, alarmed, and reprov'd; or from those, that adhere to such proud transporting, tho' delusive assurance of their interest in Christ, that setteth men above all duties and ordinances, and maketh them count the gospel, as well as the law, but beggarly rudiments.—But besides this, they ought to consider, that it is the duty of Christ's ministers, not to speak or write what people like, but what they ought to perform, without fearing the faces of men; and knowing that the *wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*; nay, seeing they stand upon the brink of destruction, to acquaint them with the bottom-

bottomless gulph which is underneath; in order, that they may not be found amongst those, of whom the Lord speaks, *(i)* that *seduced his people, saying peace, and there was no peace, and daubed the wall with untempered mortar—that healed the hurt of the daughter of his people slightly, that sewed pillows to all arm holes, making religion an easier thing than it is, more agreeable to corrupt nature, and that prophesied out of their own hearts,* that is, according to their own opinion.—And all, that cannot bear reproof, but rather like deceitfully to be treated, than to have their consciences disturbed, I would humbly advise, to take heed of not being compared with those *lying children* of whom Isaiah speaks, that *would not hear the law of the Lord; (k)* “that would not have the word of God reveal or remove their corruptions, that would not have his grace to humble and purge them;” but *said to the seers,*
see

(i) Ezek. xiii. 10.

(k) Isai. xxx. 9, 10.

see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things ; “ admonish not, counsel not, reprove not, stop us not, in the pursuit of sin ;” *speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits ;* or with the disciples of Jesus, in whose ears his doctrine, concerning eating his flesh, and drinking his Blood, founded so very harshly, that they could not tell how to bear it; and after his plain dealing with them, reproving their ignorance and unbelief, did totally forsake him, and would no longer join his company, nor hear of his doctrine. (1) And if persons of an elegant and refined taste, should expect to find some flowers of rethorick, fine style, fancy, wit, and such other ornaments, as some authors are ambitious of excelling in,— This would be more than my skill in the English language, could produce ; besides my intention is by no means to fill men’s head with notions, but to

(1) John vi. 60, 66.

to quicken and influence their affections, with a divine life and activity in Gods service.—And if what they will read without prejudice, and judge with candour, might tend to promote their knowledge and practice of real Christian religion, wherein God may be glorified, it will answer the end I aim at, and in which I shall rejoice, and by divine assistance give God the glory; disregarding all the scorn and contempt that may be cast upon me, and my imperfect labour; being sensible that the prevailing disposition of our times is such, that the well known versicle, *omnia cum liceant non licet esse pium*, i. e. that all things are allowed except to be pious, is as applicable now, as in any former age; but one therefore suffering reproach, it is his crown before the Lord, and no little part of the glory of a Christian, who is *accounted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name*.

In the mean while—that God may teach you, who read, to seek after him;
fix

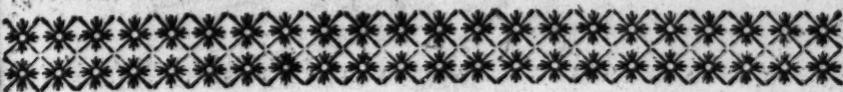
fix your attention to spiritual things, excite you to earnest inquiries after unfeigned religion, help you to consider, give you an heart inclined to a life wholly devoted to him, and that you may serve God here, so as to enjoy him hereafter—is the earnest desire and prayer of

Your servant, in the

Work of the Lord,

LAMBERTUS DE RONDE.

18 JY 64



DISCOURSE I.

Of the true SERVICE OF GOD,

PSALM II. II.

“*Serve the LORD with FEAR.*”

THAT God, who is a pure, glorious, infinite, and every way perfect Being, yea, the perfection of all perfections in the world, cannot be magnified by some external duties, moralities, or performances; as in saying prayers, reading the scriptures, going to church, partaking of the Lord's table, and giving alms to the poor—methinks every one, who has but the least apprehension of that supreme and all glorious Being, ought to know.—However, the Lord himself did shew this, to his people Israel, when he commanded them, that the *inwards and legs of the beast*, which they brought as an offering unto the Lord, *ist*, must be without *blemish*, *2d*, *washed in water*, and that his *fat*, and the *blood*, as the soul of the beast, particularly

C

larly should be for the Lord ;*—by all which things, Israel was informed, that the service of God, must be of a higher nature and nobler stamp than their outward performances ; consisting in nothing less, than in devoting themselves, and all they have, or are, or do, to the honour of the eternal God ; resigning their hearts wholly to him, and submitting all their passions, affections and pursuits to his will :—A service, which may be counted only, to be a *sweet savour unto the Lord*. And all Christians, who now live under the dispensation of the glorious gospel, ought to consider, that they are indispensably bound, to present their *souls*, as well as *bodies*, a *living sacrifice*, *holy*, *acceptable*, unto God, which is our *reasonable service* :†—And from which all outward performance proceeds,—or it is but a lifeless offering, a carcass,—abominable in the eyes of an holy God, who requireth a *living sacrifice* ;—as we see in our text, containing the advice of Christ's ministers, to the enemies of his kingdom, when they say, *serve the Lord with fear*.

Tho' this psalm has no superscription, yet the apostles, Peter and John, inform us, ‡ that David is the author of it ;

* Levit. i. 9. Exod. xxix. Lev. iii. and xvii. † Rom. xii. 1.
‡ Acts iv. 25.

it; and whilst this psalm is four times quoted in the gospel, and applied to Christ, * we don't doubt, but Christ is the chief person therein spoken of.—In the three first verses, we find, a prediction of the enemies of Christ's kingdom, how they should set themselves against it, respecting, *First*, The Gentiles, and among them the kings of Judea. *Secondly*, The rulers of the Jewish nation, who, as by gospel testimony evidently appears, have been the chief opposers of Christ. Luk. iii. 1.—In the three following verses, it is demonstrated how they should come to confusion, and their ungodly design be frustrated.—In the sixth and ninth verse, the establishment of the king over Zion, and what had passed between the Father and the Son.—Finally, the admonition given to the king's adversaries, how they ought to demean themselves towards him, *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye Judges of the earth*,—with an earnest exhortation, to their duties, viz, *Serve the Lord with fear*. The words naturally divide themselves into three parts,

I. The object, the LORD.

II. The service.

III. The manner how to serve him with fear.

I. The

* Acts iv. 15 and 13. Heb. i. 4 and 5.

I. *The object of service*, the ministers of Christ begin with, and his nature, who is the * *Jehovah*, the *Lord*, which is *his name for ever*, and his memorial; who in himself is what he is, the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, the only eternal omnipotent, omniscient, wise, holy, just, bountiful, faithful, all-sufficient, and gracious God: The Creator and preserver of the whole universe, and thus the principle of all motion; who with the hosts of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, doth what he pleases, and all the elements directeth to such ends as he from all eternity has decreed and determined, to his praise and glory.—The author and giver of every good and perfect gift, being in himself all that we can desire to make us happy: and therefore so often with the name *Jehovah*, has revealed himself unto his people, as the God of that covenant made with them, on the sacrifice of his Son only; † promising to be their God, that is to be whatsoever he is, whatsoever he hath, whatsoever he doth, nay, whatsoever he can do as God; and thus a God, as the only and most worthy object of our knowledge, faith, hope, love, adoration, thanksgiving, and obedience. No wonder

* Exod. iii. 15. Hof. xii. 5.

† Heb. viii. 10.

wonder then, that the enemies of Christ, are here called upon, to have no other as the object of their service ; for he alone, and no other, could be the object. He alone is infinitely glorious in being what he is, and must be served, because he is, what he is ; and he alone will be to a poor sinner what he is, namely whatsoever a rational creature can desire, to make him happy, and the only centre wherein all the desires and inclinations of his soul can rest, being *a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* * So then, no idols made of wood and stone, who are no Gods, † but *Jehovah* alone, who is the true God, must be the object of their service ; and seeing in the 6th verse of this psalm, Christ is declared to be *the anointed king over Zion, the holy hill of God*, to subdue his people to himself ; to rule and defend them, to restrain and conquer all his and their enemies—under whose feet the Father *has put all things, and gave him to be the head of the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all* §—and *has given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ;*
and

* Heb. xi. 6.

† 2 Kings xix. 18.

§ Eph. i. 22. 23.

and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the father. * We may, particularly, take Christ to be the object of our service, in whom alone, by the operation of the divine spirit, we can *serve* God.—Now,

II. To *serve the Lord*, may be taken in a two fold signification.

First, For the whole and unlimited devoting of ourselves, with all we are, and with all we have, unto God, to be with our souls and bodies, which are both the Lord's, subject to him, and resigned to the performance of sincere and universal obedience, to all that he commands. † Samuel calls it, *a serving of the Lord in truth, with all our hearts*; or to give it you in the apostle's phrase, to be *servent in spirit*; ‡ and no wonder for 1st. If he be our creator, that has made us, our preserver, that maintains us, and our redeemer, that hath purchased us with his own blood; verily we must *serve him* with all we are, *glorifying God both in our souls and bodies, which are his*, § or else we don't serve him at all: 2d. Do we receive whatsoever we have from his goodness and bounty? Then, also, whatsoever we have, should be employed for his glory; *to honour the Lord with our substance*,

* Phil. ii. 9. 10. 11. † 1 Sam. xii. 24. ‡ Rom. xii. 11. § 1 Cor. vi. 20.

*substance, and with the first fruits of all our increase : ** 3d. And if we wholly would be devoted to the glory of his name, it must needs follow, that whatsoever we do, should be conformable to the laws and precepts, which the most high has fet as a rule of our lives ; observing them all without exception, as the only service which he requireth, and as *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, are said to have done. †

Secondly, The service of God may also be taken from a constant attendance upon the public ordinances, which the Lord has appointed, whereby our inward religion will appear ; and by those ways of his own appointment, to be more and more improved, and confirmed, in the worship he demands.—To this, the inhabitants of the earth were exhorted,—*enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise : †*—But which outward formal service we must not think to be sufficient, as if God could be put off with it—whilst so many vain, worldly and wicked thoughts, lodge within us,—when we are so unsuitably affected with his glory, so irreverent, cold, unmeaning, and hypocritical, drawing near to him with our lips, when our hearts are far from

* Prov. iii. 9.

† Luke i. 6.

† Psa. c. 4.

from him;—no, all our *services* must proceed from an heart sanctified and wholly devoted to God, it must be done, *in spirit and in truth, with a perfect heart and with a willing mind or soul*; * that is, our will and all the affections of our souls, should be carried after and exercised in the *service of the Lord*; our love is to be supremely fixed on God, in Christ; our esteem of him, most exalted and reverential; our desires after him ardent, and our delight in God must be above all things else, our chief joy.—And indeed reader, our heart must be the source and fountain from whence all outward actions flow, and ought to be performed, † to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our father which is in heaven. ‡ The real service, must begin from our heart; this the Lord requires in the first place: *My son give me thine heart*; § and Moses earnestly said, ¶ *And now Israel what doth the Lord God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul*; that is, with integrity and sincerity of thy heart, and

not

* 1 Chro. xxviii. 9. † Dutr. xi. 13. Matt. xxii. 37, 38. Pf. lxxiii. 25.
Pf. xxxv. 9. Isaiah lxi. 10. ‡ Matt. v. 16. § Prov. xxiii. 26.
¶ Deut. x. 12.

not from any by-ends, or sinister designs; but out of pure love to God, for his own worth and excellency, and obedience to his laws, as he is the Sovereign of heaven and earth; and in his Son, the Messias, thy God?—And indeed, though it be natural to a man to deify himself, and to make himself the first *Alpha* of his actings, and the last *Omega* of his performances; if we don't *serve* God from such principles, and with a single eye aiming at nothing but his *glory*, as the end of *all our actions*;* and in conformity to his word, which is perfect in itself, and leadeth man to perfection; it is no *service* at all, and the Lord abhors it: We see this in Israel, who outwardly were *serv*ing the Lord, but inwardly their souls were averse from him; *draw*ing near to God with their mouth, and with their lips did honour him, and their fear towards him was taught by the precepts of men; therefore behold saith the Lord, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst this people, even a marvellous work, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid:†—And did not the Lord say of all their external duties, I cannot away with it, it is iniquity, they are all

* 1 Cor. x. 31. † Isaiah xxix. 13, 14.

all trouble to me, I am weary to bear them? For this therefore, shall our *service* be acceptable unto God,—it must proceed from our heart, and its first and leading motive ought to be the utmost simplicity, joined to godly sincerity; for God requi-
*reth truth in the inward parts.** The principle must be pure,—this is essential to religion, it is the rectitude of the temper, which constitutes the acceptableness of it.—Peter calls it a *sanctifying of the Lord in our hearts †*; Paul a *serving of God with the spirit. ‡*—And wherein this consists, I shall now endeavour to shew, in conformity to the word of the living God; that in a matter of so great importance, none may deceive, but examine themselves in the fear of God; and strictly take notice of the temper and issue of their heart, whether it has any real similitude to the picture I shall have drawn; and so they can be assured of the acceptableness of their religion unto God: but if not, that every one might strive for it, and no farther build their hope and comfort upon their imaginary *service*, whereby at last they will find themselves deluded.—

First, He then, that would serve God aright, must so far have been enlight-
 ened

ened by the blessed Spirit, as to have in
 some measure a clear sight of God, so as
 he is ; and a sense of all his glorious
 attributes and perfections, which he hath
 discovered of himself, in his government
 of the world, and revealed in his word ;—
 his infinite understanding, power, wis-
 dom, purity, and holiness ; his impartial
 justice, infinite goodness, unchangeable
 truth and faithfulness ; for if we have
 no true knowledge and apprehension of
 God, viz. that we should, in some de-
 gree see him to be what he is ; and a
 sense of his infinite glory and beauty,
 in being such ; but only a false image
 framed in our brain, it is impossible to
 serve him ; for how “ can we know to
 “ serve God, unless we first know that
 “ God whom we ought to serve ? For all
 “ our services unto him, must needs be
 “ both proper to his nature, and suitable
 “ to his perfections ; therefore unless I
 “ first know his nature and perfections,
 “ how can I adjust my services to them ?
 “ As for instance, I am to fear his great-
 “ ness, and trust on his mercy, and re-
 “ joice in his goodness, and desire his
 “ favour ; but how can I do this, unless
 “ I know that he is thus great and mer-
 “ ciful, good and favourable ? ” — More-
 over, how can we ever love God, as we
 ought

ought, above all things, this being the great duty he requires in his law, * without we first know him, and have a sense of his glorious perfections, in being what he is to us, better than all things, or perform any true *service* to him, unless we first know him? It is impossible!—and reason will prove the contrary: For the motions of the will being regulated by the ultimate dictates of the practical understanding, a man loves or hates, according to the knowledge he has of the object's being good or evil; consequently we can have no sincere love to God, before we know his amiableness as the supreme object; we can offer no true *service* to him, unless we first know him to be such an one as deserves to have true service performed unto him; that is, that we first have a spiritual sight and sense of his intrinsic worth, and excellency, and beauty, which begets in us high and exalted thoughts of him, and causes us to esteem, love, and adore; counting such a God worthy to be served, of all rational creatures, with all they are, and with all they have,—every faculty of their souls, and member of their bodies,—employing themselves in those services which the Lord has set them.

* Matt. xxiii. 37. 39.

them.—He that doth not first know him, in such a manner, nor has his heart possessed with a reverential apprehension of God's greatness and glory, and with a due sense of all his attributes, can never serve him: Therefore we find these connected, *know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.**

A knowledge, indeed, quite different from a natural, which in scripture is called, *that which may be known of God*, Rom. i. and is ascribed unto the Gentiles, whereby they know that there is such a supreme and all-glorious Being, in and over the world, that we call God; and which by every thing that lives, every thing that moves, nay every thing that is, evidently appears.—Or a speculative knowledge; whereby we may know what God is, what glorious perfections of him shine forth in this stately fabrick of the world we live in, what representation of his divine attributes, he has made and laid before our eyes in writing.—These things a man may know in general, so as to be able to discourse of them, and dispute for them too, and yet be destitute of that knowledge which is necessary for our true

* 1 Cron. xviii. 9.

true *service* of God, viz. A sense of God's
 glory and beauty, in being such: And
 without this, all our knowledge is but a
*form of knowledge,** and no more than that
 of the devil, who *knows also that there is a*
God, but he trembles. † “ So an unrege-
 nerate sinner, the more he knows of
 God, the more he hates him ;” *the carnal*
mind is enmity against God : † And as long
 as *he that commanded the light to shine out of*
darkness, has not shone in his heart, whereby
 he might get a sense of God's beauty, in
 being what he is, *he does not know God,*
 as John saith. § And whatever speculative
 knowledge and great sense he may
 have of God, and what he is, it will
 never move him to his service, but wholly
 to the contrary.—But those who serve God
 in spirit and in truth ; first, the eyes
 of their understanding are enlightened,
 whereof Paul speaks, ¶ *the spirit of wis-*
dom, which rests on Christ, their head, || rests
also on them as his members ; to those has
been given an understanding, that they may
know him, that is true. (a) Such a religi-
 ous person seeth God in his own light,
 he *seeth that he is good, (b)* yea and *tasteth*
too ; he feels so much inward joy and de-
light from his exalted contemplations on
 God's

* Rom. ii. 20. † James ii. 19. † Rom. viii. 7. § 1st John iv.
 ¶ Eph. i. 19. || Isaiah xi. (a) 1st John v. 20. (b) Ps. xxxviii. 9.

God's glory and loveliness, that it affects his soul, and changes it into the same image, as the apostle phraseth it, *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.* *

Secondly, A man thus illuminated and sanctified, through the knowledge of God, in Christ Jesus, cannot do else but disapprove and abandon all the idols whom he has bowed his knees to and adored; I mean the things that are in the world, *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*; ‡ now saying unto them, *get ye hence*, † no more willing to live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, no, this has been enough, yea a great deal too much; now he saith with David, *thou art God alone.* §

Thirdly, the sinner now seeing God to be such an one as he really is, and the scriptures represent him to be, and counting him infinitely glorious and amiable, begins to *love him with all his heart*, as the blessed Saviour requireth; ¶ for he having a spiritual sight of God, and a sense of his glory and beauty, loves him with a supreme love, infinitely more than himself;

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. † 1 John ii. 15, 16. ‡ Isaiah xxx. 22.
§ Ps. lxxxvii. 10. ¶ Matt. xxii. 37, 39.

self, nay, such an one reckons himself but nothing in comparison of God, and his greatness; and all what is without God, he calls it *vanity, and to be laid in the balance lighter than vanity*; * “loving himself but in proportion to his conformity to God, and knowing that he, who does not love God, with a supreme love, does not love him as God, consequently does not love him at all.” Therefore, we find these connected; *to love the Lord our God, and to serve him, with all our heart, and with all our soul.* †

“The false professor may imagine, that he has something of the love of God in him, but upon a just view of the case, it will appear that it is only to an idol, the creature of his own imagination;—if he seems to love God under an apprehension of his goodness, and mercy, he yet dreads him on account of his justice; and has an inward aversion to his purity, and holiness; so that the object of his love, is an imaginary Being, of infinite goodness and mercy, without either justice or holiness:” and thus his love comes to a mere self-love, and did he see no mercy in God, to redeem him from the curse

* Psalm lxii. 9.

† Deut. x. 17.

curse of the law, he would totally hate
 him; "and however he may deceive him-
 self in any supposed progress in reli-
 gion, he "can never satisfy his soul
 with having God for his portion; he
 can never in course keep up a life of
 spiritual mindedness, and delight in
 God, and in a way of obedience to him
 "and communion with him." Here then,
 you see a plain difference in these two
 sorts of lovers, "The one loves God,—the
 glorious God! above all things; but
 the other, seeks the favour of God from
 no other motive but fear of his wrath,
 or fear of hell, or some desire of hap-
 piness; and not from a sense of the
 excellency of his glorious perfections,
 and the blessedness of an interest in his
 holy communion; the one loves what
 God loves, and hates what he hates; the
 other retains his delights in his lusts
 and idols, and repairs to God because he
 durst not do otherwise:" But to proceed,

Fourthly, He that would serve the *Lord*
 with the spirit, now having a sense of
 the ineffable glory and beauty of the
 divine Nature, who appears glorious in
 holiness, justice, goodness, and grace;
 feeling in his heart a most genuine dis-
 position to love him, and to live to
 him, as a natural effect of love, can-

E

not

not but sincerely desire to be most nearly united to him, which can never be done but by faith in Christ. " He then having a sense, as well of his depravity and infinite ill desert, as of the glorious freeness of divine grace, the excellency and sufficiency of Christ, and the readiness of God, to be reconciled to returning sinners thro' him; with utmost solemnity he ventures his soul, his eternal all, upon Jesus Christ, as mediator; relying on his worth and merits, and trusting to the mere free mercy of God, thro' him for pardon and grace and glory;" yea pleading his atonement, and obedience, whereby divine justice has been satisfied; with an earnest desire of his soul to be as well sanctified or delivered from the power of sin, as redeemed from its curse; that he may love God out of a pure heart, and live to, yea upon him forever: " Thus by this divine light, imparted by the spirit of God, is the soul finally brought to unite to Christ by faith, and to return home to God thro' him," *for no man can come to Jesus except the Father draw him, and every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto him;** and so has the religious soul fellowship with God,
—fellow—

* John vi. 44, 45.

—fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ. * And O! how joyful must this be for such a person? When he can say by experience, *the drawings of the Lord are good to me*, or as in the Dutch and English version, *it is good to me to draw near to God*; † that is, that God having sensibly affected his soul, he is thereby elevated in spiritual nearness to him, which is put in opposition to being *far from him*; ‡ and signifies a frame of the soul, called by Hosea, *a bethrothing into God, in faithfulness, and a knowing of him*; from whence then necessarily proceeds,

Fifthly, an intire devotion, and consecration of the believer unto God, and his service; a sincere intention to love him with all the heart, and to be thoroughly resigned to his will, whether manifested in his *providence* or his *precepts*.—As to the first, by voluntary subjection, and resignation in all conditions; submission of himself and all his affairs, to God's disposal—and whatever his wisdom shall appoint, it is his virtue patiently and cheerfully to receive, saying with the old man Eli, *it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*; §—that it is no more than just, that the creature should be
subject

* 1 John i. 3. † Ps. lxxiii. 28. ‡ Ps. lxxiii. 27. § 1 Sam. iii. 18.

subject to the Creator, and knows that *serving God*, is to *serve him* according to his counsel, *Thou hast held me by the right hand, thou shalt guide me by thy counsel.**—Does it happen, that a murmuring thought comes into the mind of him that has devoted himself to God and his *service*? He then reproves himself, and says,—*My soul, wait thou only upon God, ‡ for his work is honourable and glorious. †*—But concerning the second, *The will of God in his precepts*; The believer, in whose heart the law of God is written by his spirit, and put in his inward parts, will, from a disposition to love God supremely, and serve him aright, naturally be inclined and enabled to perform a sincere, and universal obedience to all his commands: He says, in sincerity of heart, what Israel of old, once so rashly said to Moses, § *All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient*; and no wonder—to *serve God* and to be obedient, cannot be separated: *Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cleave unto him: ¶* Consequently whatever appears to him not to agree with the word of God, and

* Ps. lxxix. 23. 24. ‡ Ps. lxxii. 5. † Ps. cxi. 3. § Exod. xxiv. 7.
¶ Deut. xiii. 4.

and his own conscience, he will not do, but *with purpose of heart cleave to the Lord, and his service* ;*—for this, therefore, he is also inclined to perform whatsoever he knows to be the will of God, notwithstanding it should be against his own disposition, and interest, and practice of others; *the commandment of God is here his lamp, and the law his light* ;† and his understanding, thereby kindled, illuminated and sanctified, causes him *to cleanse his way* ;‡—being likewise endeavouring to do all God's will, so that he therein may serve not himself, but the Lord ; and that, not merely from a principle of obedience; which the law requires, and as a duty to be done ; no, this would not be genuine, but a forced thing ; for tho' the command of God is much valued by, and of great weight with a godly man, in some sense laying a constraint upon him ; yet it is certain, that our *service and obedience*, must “ primarily, and antecedent
 “ to any consideration of advantage or
 “ disadvantage, rewards or punishments,
 “ or of the positive will of God, take
 “ its rise from a sense of the infinite
 “ excellency of the divine nature ; which
 “ makes it our duty, as being in him
 “ self

* Acts xi. 23. † Prov. vi. 23. ‡ Ps. lxxix. 9.

“ self-lovely, and worthy of our highest
 “ esteem, to serve and obey him;”—and
 from the reasonableness and goodness
 of the law; being in itself *holy, just and
 good*, as the apostle speaks, Rom. vii. 12.
 Now that God is so lovely in himself,
 nay the most lovely and amiable of all
 Beings, none can deny, who have but
 the least conception of him, and his glo-
 rious attributes; for in him “ there is
 an harmonious concurrence of all beau-
 ties and perfections; and all the excel-
 lencies, that can possibly attract our es-
 teem, love and service, in infinite de-
 grees, are concentrated in his nature.”—
Wisdom, both the ornament and perfec-
 tion of a creature, is but a spark of light
 fallen from the Father of lights, and is
 to be found originally in him, who is
the only wise God.”*—*Power*, the thing
 which is universally courted among men,
 is fundamentally in him, *who hath made
 the heavens, and the heaven of heavens, and
 who preserveth them still.*†—“ *Justice*, which
 makes the righteous man more excellent, than
 his neighbours,† is a glorious attribute of
 his Godhead” *who is righteous in all his
 ways, and holy in all his works.*—“ *Holiness*,
 a thing so venerable among men, the
 most

* 1 Tim. i. 17.

† Neh. ix. 6.

† Prov. xii. 26.

most orient pearl that they can shew, is but a faint ray of that infinite purity, which is in God."—" *Kindness and beneficence*, which no man ever hated, which wins upon all ; is essential to him, who is the fountain of all good," and *whose mercy endureth forever* ; *—and to name no more, " *Beauty*, that common allurement of love, is so conspicuous in him, that the most glorious inhabitants of heaven, who see his face, are dazzled with the glory of it ; for the seraphims in Isaiah's vision, appear covering their faces in the presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative deformity, or as unable to sustain the refulgent lustre of the divine perfections :"—If then we deservedly love and esteem those persons who are possessed of these graces, tho' in an imperfect degree ; how can we but love, reverence and serve God, who is the glorious centre, in whom all these excellencies meet,—in whom perfect *wisdom* and unerring *justice*, melting *goodness*, and tender *mercy* are all united to captivate our affections ?" So then, the truly religious soul, does not principally love God and his laws, by virtue of a command to do so, but by virtue of the agreeableness

ableness and perfection, that he sees in it, and as in itself worthy to be desired ; as David speaks, Psalm xix. “ In which Psalm, the holy man gives us a full account, why he did so love and esteem the laws and commandments of God, viz. because they are perfect, right, pure, clean, true, sweet and lovely ; as you will find, verse 7, 8, 9, 10 : ” This being not only the greatest duty, but also the highest privilege, honour and happiness, of the soul which is reconciled to the nature of God.—This was the temper of David, when he saith Psalm cxix. 173, *I have chosen thy precepts*, and verse 30 ; *I have chosen the way of truth*, not by the mere severity of a law, but as that which was indeed, most just, eligible, pleasant, and desirable ;—and the object of true religion, is no other than God : Principally and ultimately, it fixes upon God, as upon its centre, as upon its proper and adequate object : It views God, as the infinite and absolute perfection, in himself lovely, and worthy to be obeyed, and as the supreme and most excellent good desired : Thus it is drawn to him without any external force, but freely and swiftly, and carries the soul out after him, and communion with him.—But to proceed,

Sixthly,

Sixthly, A religious Christian who serves the Lord a-right, has from the sense of the infinite dignity, greatness, glory and excellency of God, love to and communion with him, an extraordinary delight in the contemplations of God, his works, ways, and every thing wherein he meets him ;—a religion which Paul so exceedingly was taken with, that he said to the believers, *Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice*: And to shew what joy he meant, he prayed the God of hope to fill them with all joy and peace, in believing, that ye may be found in hope, through the power of the holy Ghost.* But the Christian joy will be spoke of in the following sermon: Mean while it is certain, that a Christian, who lives near to God, finds very often *God his maker, who giveth songs in the night*, † 1st. By meditating on the works of the all-glorious Creator of whatsoever was made in the heaven above, or on earth beneath; therein praising and glorifying God's infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; and filled with admiring and adoring thoughts of God, says with David, *O! come let us sing unto the Lord*, ‡ &c. *for the Lord is a great king above all Gods*; verse 3.

F in

* Rom. xv. 13.

† Job xxiv. 10.

‡ Ps. xc. 1.

in his hand are the deep places of the earth, the strength of the hills is his also, the sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. And 2dly by viewing the Lord's conduct in respect to the government of his church, in maintaining, and protecting it, and restraining his people's enemies: All these things the divinely enlightened and religious soul observes, and cries out with Paul, *O ! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.* * Moreover,—

Seventhly, A religious Christian, who serves God with the Spirit, by Paul called, *he that is spiritual*, † is fully convinced, that God is a Spirit, and therefore will be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and that the law, which shews us how, and wherein the Lord will be served, is spiritual; each command comprehending under it, not only outward acts, but inward; yea, and every intention and thought, having either a more immediate or distant tendency to violate it;—hence he cannot but see with grief and sorrow, his inconformity to it, and will be forced to cry with “Paul, *O ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ?* † For this there-

* Rom. xi. 33.

† 1 Cor. ii. 15.

† Rom. vii. 24.

therefore, even as the apostle did, *he serves the Lord with all humility of mind*, * that is,

i. with having no high, but a low opinion of himself, concerning his wisdom, dignity, and capacity; not leaning unto his own understanding, † but depending on the instruction of God, and praying with David, *Lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day*; ‡—not trusting unto his own sufficiency, *so as to think any thing as of himself, but his sufficiency ascribing unto God*; §—not thinking himself to be something, but a mere nothing in regard to God's greatness, yea no more than a *poor creature among men*,—*poor in spirit*; ¶—in a word, to be so humble before the most high and glorious God, that he confesses, not to know, or to have the least ability of doing, any thing acceptable to him, but through the free grace of God in Christ; and thus, as it is written, *he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord*. ||—but,

ii. This humility with which a religious Christian, serves the Lord, must also be considered, relative to his neighbour, and in which is presupposed and implied,

i. Joy in the gifts and graces the Lord has freely bestowed upon him, praising
and

* Acts xx. 19. † Prov. iii. 5. ‡ Ps. xxv. 5. § 2 Cor. iii. 5.
¶ Isaiah xxix. 19. Matt. v. 3. || Cor. i. 31.

and glorifying God, for the effects it hath upon others, being as content therewith as if it were done by himself.—Such an humility, Paul shew'd us, when he gave thanks to God, *which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you**—He did live in it, when he saw the happy and prosperous efficacy of the talents of his fellow-men.—This he wrote unto the Thessalonians, chapter iii. 8. *For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.*—Thus, when an humble soul sees God may be glorified in bestowing his gifts and graces, tho' not on him, but on others, he beholds it with a great deal of joy and pleasure.

ii. *Forbearance* of the faults and frailties of others *in love*; † because charity, or true love to our neighbour, being inseparably connected with humility, is kind, *envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*; † and some verses following, we find a commendation of the grace and duty of *charity* to our neighbour, which must needs be practised of a true servant of God, but so, that it may stand with the truth; as the apostle shews in the 6th verse, *charity also rejoiceth in the truth*, that is, as the Rev. William Burkett
faith,

* 2 Cor. viii. 16.

† Eph. iv. 2.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

faith, “ in men’s loving truth, doing
 “ justly, and living righteously, accord-
 “ ing to the rule of truth, the gospel.”—
 Such an humiliation, makes a religious
 person always ready to serve his fellow
 Christian by *love*, * esteeming this to be
 the thing only, which he must *owe* to
 men; † and from which principle it is,
 that in discharging his duty to his neigh-
 bour, he has no thoughts to please him-
 self therein, much less to have the ap-
 plause of men; no, but he thinks it to
 be his indispensable duty to do it, as be-
 ing a thing right and fit in itself; and
 therefore the apostle saith, *owe no man any-
 thing, but to love one another, for he that
 loveth another, hath fulfilled the law*: † and
 thus, knowing that it is in its own na-
 ture right, that he should love him, all
 that indecent applause, regard, love, if
 not adoration, which are given to him
 by men, makes him very uneasy; and
 instead of being thereby lifted up, the
 lower and the more he is abased; not in
 words only, (this a self-loving hypocrite,
 knows how to perform as well as any
 one; in hopes that he by his verbal
 meekness, and external humility, may
 receive so much the more praise and adu-
 lation

* Gal. v. 13.

† Rom. xiii. 8.

† Rom. xiii. 8.

lation from men) but in his heart, and before the all-seeing eyes of God, whom he serves, and to whom he will give praise and glory : And no wonder he is so abased, by the efficacious influence of the divine Spirit, the eyes of his understanding being enlightened, he sees, not only his incumbent duty of loving, esteeming, and adoring the most High, but he knows the plague of his own heart too ; * and seeing his remaining sinfulness, abhors himself, and is especially grieved for his inconformity to God ; heavily complains of his defective service, which cannot but abase and deeply humble him before his God, saying with Paul, *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, † and esteems others better than himself : ‡* None can be meaner in his eyes, than he himself, none have more reason to be humble, and of a contrite spirit, than he.—Lastly, the religious Christian, who is obliged to *serve God with the spirit*, but viewing himself infinitely far from being what he ought to be, and as by remaining corruption, and in-dwelling sins, very often hindered in his design to serve the Lord his God *with all his heart and with all his soul* ; find-

ing

* 1 Kings viii. 38.

† Eph. iii. 8.

‡ Philip. ii. 3.

ing by experience, with Paul, *that although he hath a delight in the law of God, after the inward man, he has another law in his members waring against the law of his mind*; * yea, seeing how often he is subject to general temptations of satan, of the world, and of his own depraved heart,—such an one I say must be on his guard, *watch and pray*. †

1. *Watch* against all such occasions, opportunities, employments, societies, retirements and business, as are apt to entangle his natural temper, or provoke his corruption.—He must lay in provision in store, against the approach of any temptations; that is, he must keep the heart full of a sense of God's glorious perfections, without exception, who is to be loved with a supreme love for his own excellency, even as Joseph did, under that strong temptation to adultery from Potifar's wife,—he said, *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!* † —He did not hate the sin, because it might expose him to the contempt of man, but because it was levelled against God; therefore he dare not, he cannot indulge it.—How clear an evidence was this, of his high sense and lively apprehension

* Rom. vii. 22, 23.

† Matt. xxvi. 41.

† Gen. xxxix. 9.

hension of God's infinite amiableness, and real love to him?

2. He must store the heart, with the sense of the love of God in Christ, with the eternal design of his grace, with a taste of the blood of Christ, and his love, in the shedding of it; get a relish for the privileges he has thereby received, as adoption, justification, acceptation with God;—Fill the heart with thoughts of the beauty of holiness, as it is designed by Christ, for the end, issue, and effect of his death: All this, will fortify him against all temptations and assaults whatever. And suppose the soul of the religious Christian has been surprised by temptation, he will *beseech God, that it may depart from him*; *—He will fly to Christ, who in a particular manner was tempted too, and beg of him to give him succour in this needful time of trouble: †—He will lie down at his feet, make his complaint known to him,—beg his assistance, and be assured that it will not be in vain,—for *he hath promised deliverance*, —*is faithful, and will not suffer him to be tempted above what he is able*. ‡ Nay, the religious soul, is continually longing to have Christ's victory carried on in itself.

* 2 Cor. xii 9. † Heb. ii. 18. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 13.

to have Christ going on in him, conquering and to conquer, till at length the very last enemy be subdued.—Hence we see too, how true religion is always active and vigorous, full of life and power, perpetually studying conformity to God, living for him, and in his holy communion:—The disposition of the religious soul is like that of Paul, Philps. iii, 12, 13, 14. *It follows after, that he may apprehend; he forgets those things that are behind, and reaches forth unto those things that are before; pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* It is not content to receive of Christ's fullness, but endeavours to be filled with the fullness, with all the fullness of God: Not acquiescing in received grace, but daily striving for its increase, until it come to the measure of the stature of its Lord, and be grown up into him in all things, who is the head even Christ.—Eph. iv. 15.

Thus we have briefly gone thro' what was proposed, have considered what was implied in the service of God, and so I come,

III. To the third part of my text to be observed here, viz. *the mode or manner* how we ought to serve God, *with fear.*

Fear, is the great and moral duty, which Moses and the Prophets did constantly

stantly prescribe to Israel, God's people:—'Twas the very act, whereby Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did most convincingly evidence the truth and sincerity of their faith in the Messias :——'Twas the practice of all pious Israelites, that walked in the way of those ancestors ;—'Twas the glory and praise of God's holy favourites, by which their names, even to the latest posterity, were perpetuated ;—'Twas the just mark and evidence of that people in whom the Son of God was well-pleased, and whereby they were distinguished from the ungodly world, and deceitful hypocrites ; and thus the most charming virtue, nay the chief ornament, and beauteous image of the religious Christian ; whereby he is kept under an holy awe of the eye of God, and walks with high esteem and reverence, before the presence of the glorious Deity ; to shun whatever might displease, and practice whatever might please God and be commanded by him.

—A *fear*, which is called the dutiful and ingenuous *fear* of a child, opposed to the servile and offending *fear* of a slave.—

A *fear*, which will make us very careful in our whole conduct, and restrain us from the commission of sin, even tho' God should have threatened no punishment

ment against it.—By this fear, we “ have such a due sense of God’s majesty, holiness, justice and goodness, as shall make us not dare to offend him ;—for each of these attributes is able to raise a suitable fear in every serious mind :—His *majesty*, a fear to affront it by being irreverent ; his *holiness*, a fear to offend it, by being carnal ;—His *justice*, a fear, to provoke it by being presumptuous ; and his *goodness*, a fear to forfeit it by being unthankful.” This fear, the people of God are excited to, and thereby confirmed in the way of their duty: *Fear God and keep his commandments* ;* nay the most wise King says in the same place, that to *fear God and keep his commandments* is the conclusion of the whole matter, or the whole duty of man ; or according to the Dutch translation, this becomes *all men* ; or as others interpret it, *this is the whole of man*, or more agreeable to the Hebrew text, *this is the whole man*, viz. all what belongs to man and its perfection ; this is the thing which he must aim at, this his chief business on earth, and from this, his greatest felicity depends ; without *fearing God and keeping his commandments* he is rather a brute than a man, destitute

* Eccl. xii. 13.

tute of the image of God perfectly revealed in Christ Jesus, and of which the moral-law is a transcript, consisting in a true knowledge of, and sincere love to God, and our neighbour. * If this be wanting, every thing is wanting ; for *on these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets ; and charity or love, never shall fail, but abide to all eternity.* †—Hence then it is the desire of God's children, to pay an unreserved obedience to all the commands of the Lord, and an humble submission to all the disposals of his providence : The *service*, and *fear* of God, more than once in the holy scriptures, are reciprocated, because, those that *serve the Lord*, † (viz. endeavour, by the grace of God, to perform a sincere and universal obedience to all his commandments) must also walk with a filial *fear*, before God ; to shun whatsoever he forbids and hates, even as Job, who *was one that feared God and eschewed evil* § ; yea, if the sinner, tho' renewed by the blessed Spirit, represent to himself the eyes of the most holy God ; and being conscious of his own imperfections, of the short extent of his knowledge, of the remains of his old nature ; it cannot be otherwise, but

* Matt. xxii. 37, 40. † 1 Cor. xiii. ‡ Lev. xix. 14. Deu. iv. 10, &c.
§ Job i. 3.

but the remembrance thereof, will fill him with shame and confusion; and a sight and sense of God's dignity, beget in him a reverential fear and veneration, for him *with whom is terrible majesty*.*—

This was the exhortation of the Psalmist, *fear him all ye seed of Israel*; †—and such holy awe, peculiarly suits the religious Christian, when he draws nigh to God in his appointed ordinances, or attends public worship; to do it with a reverential sense of him whose throne is in heaven, and his footstool the earth:—Then he ought to say, with Ezra, *my God I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee my God*, ‡—and not to be *rash with his mouth, nor his heart be hasty to utter any thing before God* §:—Nay then we ought to be in the same frame of Cornelius, who said, *Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things, that are commanded thee of God*. ¶

Thus, we have considered the true service of Jehovah the Lord, what it implies, and in what manner it ought to be performed.—I shall now proceed to the

A P P L I C A T I O N,

And therein more enlarge, with an intention, if it were possible, to change
by

* Job xxxvii. 22. † Ps. xxii. 23. ‡ Ezra ix. 6. § Eccl. v. 2.
¶ Acts x. 33.

by the grace of God, the heart of the ungodly, and inflame the soul of the daughters of Zion, unto the praise of God, and zeal for the practice of true and heavenly devotion, so highly necessary in our days.—It is true if I consider our present time, in which the generality of men have a disgust at the word of God, and a great many have even imbibed the absurd, nay blasphemous principles of *deism*, if not *atheism*; not regarding any practice of Christianity, because it does not suit their corrupt mind and nature; laughing at those who urge it, and counting it only as notions and fanaticism; I expect no other but to be contemned for my low capacity and nonsense;—for let Nehemiah, that great zealot for the honour of his God, strengthen his hands for a great work; immediately Sanballet, and Tobias, and others, are ready to *laugh and scorn him*; * and the godly Jews, as soon they engaged themselves in the same work *were mocked*. † —Envy and malice will always cast up dust against the best man and his work, especially when he earnestly presses upon piety; but whilst I know that all men are in the hand of God, who is able of

those

* Neh. ii. 19.

† Neh. iv. 1.

those stones to raise up children unto Abraham,
 I am encouraged not to be silent, but to
 do the work of an evangelist, and make
 full proof, of the ministry with which
 the Lord has entrusted a poor worm, to
 preach the word, to be instant in season and out
 of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with long
 suffering and doctrine; * the more in this
 time, in which they will not endure sound
 doctrine, but after their own lust, heap to them-
 selves teachers; having itching ears, turning
 away their ears from the truth, and are turned
 unto fables. * Therefore did we see both
 what it was to serve God, and how we
 ought to do it;—and then take a view
 of our modern Christianity, in the per-
 forming of the true service of God, and
 compare it with the description I have
 given you of the very essence of it; how
 rare the religious Christians will then be
 in our days! how small the number!
 * may so small, that we are forced to cry
 out, *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for
 the faithful fail from among the children of
 men*; ‡ or to complain with Jeremiah,
*Thou art near in their mouth and far from their
 reins*; † for do they serve God, whose
 daily and continual employments and
 pleasure are the world and themselves?
 Whose

* 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3, 4.

‡ Ps. xii. 1.

† Jere. xii. 2.

Whose belly is their God? And the world their Lord? Who serve themselves or satan, instead of the living God? Can this consist with the service of the Lord? No saith Christ, this is impossible, *No man can serve two masters, ye cannot serve God and mammon.**—Do they serve the Lord, who allow themselves to blaspheme God? to dishonour his name by customary swearing, or grossly to violate the Lord's day, or commonly to neglect the solemnities of his public worship, or in their families, and in private? Do they serve God a-right that have so many vain thoughts, so many wordly thoughts, so many wicked thoughts, lodged within them, when they come to worship God, *drawing near to him with their lips, when their hearts are far from him,*† having no reverential fear for his presence? And not to mention the misapprehensions which are usually entertained of God, and that aptness to frame corporeal ideas of the infinitely incomprehensible nature; I would ask you farther, do they *serve God*, who never have had a spiritual sight of him, nor sense of his glory and beauty, in being what he is, or a knowledge whereby a man not only knows but feels,

* Matt. vi. 24.

† Isaiah xxix. 13.

feels, that is, experiences in some measure in himself, God to be so, this being the foundation of *serving God a-right*, and of true piety? I say by no means: For as it is only by the certain knowledge we have of a person and his qualities that our judgment is moved to esteem or despise him, and our will determined to love or hate him, even so in respect to God; without having, in some measure, right apprehensions of him, and a sense of his glorious perfections, it is impossible to love, esteem, or perform any true service to him.—And yet we see, that most of the inhabitants of the world, nay thousands of nominal Christians, who have a great opinion of their love and service of God, are destitute of such a sense, and how then can it be possible for them to serve and fear him? O sad and deplorable condition, in which religion appears! When we view the conduct of those only, that live under the dispensation of the gospel, can we find religion universally reigning among them? Dare we to suppose that it is effectually in every life, that it dwells in every breast? Alas! the vitals and essentials of Christianity, are much exhausted, and but few bones left,—rather the picture or skeleton of a Christian, than the living body; or at the highest,

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the ornaments of Christianity, are more sought in our days, than the substance of it ; there is no fear, no love, no esteem, nor any veneration for the holy and glorious God, in the heart of the most of men, amongst us ; but profaning his great and terrible name, and day ; violating his holy law, in setting up against him so many idols of jealousy ; contemning authority, disobeying superiors,—even murder, adultery, theft and perjury, are common sins ; yea is not the conduct of some that are born and educated in a Christian and Protestant nation, so scandalous, that they oblige us to think their opinion to be, “ that the neglect, and even the contempt of religion, is a glory rather than a reproach ? ” for if we look upon the generality of men, where does religion among us appear ? Where is a conversation honourable to our holy profession ? Where do men walk worthy their vocation and calling ? Where do they adorn the doctrine of Christ, and in all things maintaining those works which are good and profitable unto men, and behaving themselves as persons, that profess Godliness,—all of them duties so highly pressed in the gospel ? * It rather seems as if

• 2 Cor. vii. 1. Tit. ii. 10. Eph. iv. 1. Tit. iii. 2.

if the fear of the Lord were banished,
 as if the *conscience was seared with an hot
 iron*, nay as if the infinite obligation of
 the creature to the great Creator and
 Benefactor, was totally annulled.—Men's
 actions are more influenced by the fear
 of man, than of God ; for they commit
 those sins in secret, which they dare not
 commit openly ;—they take more care
 to appear, than really to be devout ;—in
 a loose and licentious age they choose ra-
 ther to break the laws of God, than to
 be thought unfashionable or ill bred ;
 and they disown the principles of their
 religion, tho' they really believe them ;
 or conceal the truth for fear of incurring
 the censure of harshness, preciseness
 and singularity, or losing the favour of
 friends and popular applause : And in
 times of persecution, or when interest
 requires it, they fall away from the
 truth, and make ship-wreck of their
 faith when storms arise ; and so it is
 evident, that in the conduct of their
 lives, they are more swayed by the fear
 of men, than of God :—In short, real
 piety stands in mourning, and laments
 the violation and murder committed
 against its children.—The venerable
 truths of the scripture are forced, up-
 rightness

rightness is trodden under foot,—fidelity destroyed, and true unfeigned love and Christian charity, mostly expelled from the earth ; but lies and treacheries, cheats, and hatred, are joined together and conquer all that come before them : —The world triumphs, and plants its banner in most of the cities and villages of *America* ; sensuality, has scaled the houses of the grandees, the flesh rules over the spirit without the least resistance ; the belly is every ones God, and all the members are yielded to sin—Voluptuousness gets the best food, and is on purpose fattened like a wanton calf of the stall ; in a word, the learned and unlearned, the high and low, the rich and poor, have their separate walk, concurring all in this, to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator.—O scandalous idolatry ! and the more dreadful it is, that those spiritual idolaters dare to call themselves Christians ; and that they commit the greatest sins without scruple, yet rely on God's grace and mercy, expecting their future happiness, as well as others ; and are even so bold, as to attend that awful and solemn ordinance, the Lord's Supper, stretch forth their hands to the consecrated elements, eat the bread and drink the wine, as a sign

of their share in the covenant of grace ; nevertheless, the receiving of the sacraments is no sooner over, but they *return with the swine, to the mire, and with the dog to the vomit.* Which clearly shews, how they only flatter God with their mouth, and belie him with their tongue ; how they dishonour and despise him, mocking his threatenings, if not calling religion itself a cheat, and judge all that make an appearance of holiness to be hypocrites and false pretenders. O horrible ! is this the service of the Lord ? is this the coat of the sons of God ? is this the livery of a Christian indeed ? who can believe it ? what man that understands any thing of God and his attributes, of the work of redemption by Christ Jesus, of the duty of the creature to the great Creator and preserver of all things ; can think well of such a condition, whereas it has not the least conformity to a Christian ? and tho' their conscience now and then begins to check, and cause them to blush at their ungodliness, the devil will soon shew them how to stifle those checks, either by slighting their sins, or making the way that leads to heaven very broad, or lulling them asleep, or dispelling all fear of death and the torments of hell.—Or does
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the sinner begin to awake and get a sight and great sense of God ; does he see that he lies in a dangerous ditch, and is not in a right way,—then, immediately the deceiver will obscure the greatness and heinousness of his vices, directly the *sins* are but an indifferent *diversion of life*; luxury, is become a kind of *generosity*; pomp, pride and grandeur, a *meer neatness*; fornication, an *infirmity of the flesh*; the basest avarice, a *laudable frugality*; the greatest drunkenness, a *little mirth*; or at the highest, a *fault*; spending the time foolishly and wickedly, in vain and enslaving diversions, an *innocent* if not a *profitable amusement*; scandalous infidelity and hateful hypocrisy, a *fine policy*, or *laudable prudence*; a proud, foolish affectation, a *genteel behaviour*; anger and malice, a *zeal for the righteous cause*, or *for the public good*; “ nay, even oppression, gains the credit of *equity*; cruelty, passes for *moderation*, tyranny, for *justice*, and the man who deserves reproach, is celebrated by *adulation*, and applauded by *delusion*, for his wisdom and virtues ;” and farther, all sins wherewith the most holy God is provoked and offended, the deluded sinner calls but trifles; and the most horrible customs, are by him characterized *the fashion of the world*,—in order

to avoid the dread of *the wrath to come*. But if the devil cannot succeed in this, to extinguish the light of conscience, then he turns it another way, by giving the sinner a false idea of God's mercy, of Christ's perfect atonement, and comforts him with an imaginary faith and justification, or with a whole list of the sins of the saints, and imperfections of the best Christians, who *in many things offend all* ; * as if the law were made void by faith, or grace could consist with committing all kinds of sin, and conversion were nothing but a confession of his transgressions, and a grievous sense of an awakened conscience.—Or wo'n't this be sufficient to make him quiet—is the word of God too evident to deny? the law too holy to withstand? the demand too just to reject? and its curse too horrible, not in a manner to be feared? and is he thus forced to consent to virtue and holiness? immediately the deceiver uses other tricks by which he may prevent the sinner from going to Christ the fountain of living waters, that he may be cleansed from all unrighteousness; some he allures with pleasant company, by which they grow wanton, others

* James ii. 3.

others with a glorious representation of the goods and riches of this world, so that their eyes are continually fixed upon, and their affections carried after them; now having no more thoughts at all of the highest and chief good, or repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; the sinner is transported by the honours, pageantries, and pleasures of this world, into a more than ordinary content; and what he must eat, and what he must drink, and wherewithall he shall be clothed, are questions he has a greater desire to have resolved, than to know how to be reconciled to God, to *serve* him here a-right and perfectly hereafter; he dislikes to be retired in order that he may consider on his spiritual state, but the mind is solely employed about worldly objects, the will grows more obdurate and addicted to sin, nay, finally he falls into a custom of sinning, till his heart is hardened, and the foundation of his hope begins to shake.—However, that faithful witness within him must be made easy when it begins to plead with him again, and to bid him consider what he does, and what will be the dreadful consequence of his sinful actions; hence then it is, that some will deviate from the truth, and because they can't bear the splendour

splendour of its holiness, adhere to those
 sects and parties, who have found out
 another way to heaven, and by wresting
 the scriptures, invented such shifts and
 evasions as suit the corrupt mind of men;
 whereby they count little of sin, obscure
 the light of conscience, laugh at fear
 and dread, and ascribe all grace, joy, and
 comfort to such a kind of faith;—which
 we can obtain by our own strength, or by
 a mere confident belief of our personal
 actual interest in Christ Jesus, that expels
 all fears and doubts: By this, such an (ima-
 ginary) believer, tho' a thief, murderer,
 or whoremonger, is persuaded, that he ne-
 ver shall fail in his hope—as blasphemous
 Antinomians, Moravians, and others join-
 ing with them, impudently assert!—in-
 deed a pleasing doctrine, to the wanton
 flesh, altogether agreeable to bold, care-
 less, and impenitent sinners, that would
 not be disturbed by fear of the lightening
 and thunder claps from Mount Sinai. An
 evasion by which the prince of this world,
 has heretofore deluded thousands of no-
 minal Christians, and he still continues
 to do so in our days—but alas! how
 dreadful will be the aspect of a revenge-
 ful God, at the day of their resurrec-
 tion, when they shall find themselves
 deceived, and finally ashamed of their
 hope!

hope! * But to proceed.—There are others, that appear to be religious, that abstain from some gross and scandalous immoralities or defaming vices, behaving themselves by their outward appearance very decently, attending the public worship, or perhaps private devotions in the family, or in particular societies too;—yet among the generality of those pretended Christians, as in innumerable

* It is worth while here to transcribe, what I read of this presumptuous faith in the *second volume* of the new edition of the cases of conscience, by *S. Pike*, and *S. Hayward*,—The author having demonstrated the essence of saving faith, not to consist in a full persuasion of our interest in Christ, as some pretend, he says, “ This is a very dangerous opinion and ’tis to be feared some have made an unholy use of it. Some persons, of this notion, apprehend, that because grace is absolutely free, therefore all a sinner is to do, is to persuade himself directly and immediately, that Christ and all the blessings of grace are his.—Thus they encourage a presumptuous hope, an ungrounded assurance; and would persuade persons at once to believe their interest in Christ; and then assure them that all is well—do any such presumptuous persons read these lines, I would here take the freedom to describe their character, and read their doom—you say in your hearts, “ Well, since Christ and grace are free I will “ therefore firmly believe that Christ is mine, and heaven “ is mine, let my conscience, let my conduct say what it will “ to the contrary—I am persuaded that all is well; and because I am so persuaded, therefore all is actually well with “ me: I will make it my chief business to keep this persuasion alive in my mind; and when any thing arises in “ my experience or conduct that would forbid the persuasion, I will believe through it all, and so prove the truth “ and strength of my faith, by believing in opposition to “ all my sense, feeling and conversation;” and when a per-

merable instances appears, there is nothing which looks like a genuine service of God, or a spiritual and divine life:— Their decent conduct, their love, and whole exercise of religion, usually proceeds, not from a right apprehension of God, and a sense of his glorious excellencies, but merely from a principle of base selfishness, or self-love, whereby “fallen men being ignorant of God, are inclined entirely to love themselves;” for instance, as they “could wish they were happy, tho’ they have not so much light as to discover, nor ability to choose the right way to real hap-

son is risen to such a pitch of presumptuous hope and assurance, he grows the looser in his conduct, and the more regardless about sin and duty, and looks down with contempt upon the poor doubting but cautious Christian; esteeming him a legalist for the tenderness of his conscience, and for the sacred regard he has to practical and experimental religion. —I hope there are not many, who abuse the precious doctrines of true grace in such a vile manner; but be they more or fewer, they may see their picture, and read their doom in Micah iii. 11, 12. *The heads thereof judge for reward, yet they will lean upon the Lord, and say, is not the Lord among us? surely no evil can come upon us; therefore shall Zion for your sake, be plowed as a field, &c.* Those who will thus lean upon the Lord, will persuade themselves at all adventures that they are safe, while they regard iniquity in their hearts, and practise it in their lives; are the most detestable of all that wear the Christian name, and must expect to have their presumptuous hopes totally demolished; while the poor dark, conscientious Christian, whom they despise, shall be brought forth to the light of comfort and joy. —

happinefs;—conscience having discovered the certain reward and wages of sin, self-love will easily prompt men to do something or other to escape it; but how? By being religious, which is the only expedient that can be found out; and therefore they begin to think, how they may become friends with God, they will up and be doing, to appease him; and tho' they look upon God as a dreadful, severe, passionate and revengeful majesty, yet they fancy this angry Deity to be of a weak mercenary temper, like themselves, and not hard to be appeased neither; and so imagine, that some cheap services, attendance on worship, prayer, or sacrament, abstinence from gross immoralities, and a life of moral honesty, will make them friends; for it is reconciliation to an angry God they aim at, and to be rescued from the stings and agonies of conscience; not union to an holy God, or communion with him, and conformity to the divine image, tho' these things never can be divided:—Or he is religious for God's received benefits and blessings' sake, and the like motives, of which we shall speak more directly; and thereby clearly will appear, that self, is the great Diana of every natural man, and the principle only,

only, from which he acts ; and this, the devil himself knows, not to be the service the Lord requires, which must flow from a sincere principle of *love* and *fear* of God, if it would be acceptable to him ; thus in regard to Job, whom God had blessed, satan said to the Lord, *doth Job fear God for nought ? but put forth thine hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face,—or bless thee,** agreeable to the Dutch translation, i. e. *it*. See then, whether it will not be manifest, that he has served thee merely from self-love, for thy blessings' sake, and not from a sense of thy infinite glory and excellency:—Or 2d, As a flatterer with outward service, and not in private, nor with his heart has sanctified that great and terrible name, the Lord:—So as thou thoughtest to be served, the devil will say.—But in order more fully to support, what I have said, I earnestly entreat this favour of you candid reader, to whom I must speak with all plainness and freedom, as well as seriousness and kindness, of the great things by which the most High can be glorified, and on which I certainly know your eternal felicity depends;—that you would be pleased to give a serious at-

tention

* Job i. 9.

tention to the real temper and character of a religious Christian, and to that of an hypocrite, which I distinctly shall lay before you; that you may be assisted in judging what you are, and what you ought to be, whether you are yet a stranger, to real religion, or are experimentally acquainted with it?

The Temper and Character of an HYPOCRITE *is,*

I. That he but outwardly professes the truth and Christian religion, tho' he has perhaps not the least idea of it, much less an heart inclined to God and the truth.

II. That he has but a speculative knowledge of God, the only object of his religion, without a sense of his beauty and glorious perfections, in being what he is.

III. That his knowledge of God and reli-

The Temper and Character of a religious CHRISTIAN *is,*

I. That he has in some measure a distinct apprehension of the truth, and a sincere intention to practise it,

II. That he has not only in some measure a right apprehension of what God is, but also a sense of his glory and beauty, in being such,

III. That his knowledge is sanctified,
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HYPOCRITE.

religion, leaves him as he is, unrenewed and disobedient, not having the wisdom, which descendeth from above, but which is earthly, sensual, devilish: § A knowledge which puffeth him up, ¶ and with its increase very often transforms him into a proud devil; because it is un sanctified, and thus of no effectual influence upon his heart and life, but only swims in the head, and leaves him secure and careless in the concerns of spiritual and eternal things; these appear to him but trifles and follies, not worth his solemn attention.

IV.

James iii. 25. ¶ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

CHRISTIAN.

guiding his feet into the way of peace;* and can be said to be first pure; then peaceable, gentle and easy, to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; † and where by such a religious Christian now having as well a clear sight of the sinfulness of his nature, as of God and his greatness, becomes humble and willing to follow Christ's example, who was meek and lowly in heart; yea the more he knows, and is sensible of God and his own loathsomeness, the more humility will increase upon him, even as it was with Job, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,*

* Luke i. 79. † James iii. 17.

HYPOCRITE.

IV. That his religion results merely from a principle of self-love, a slavish fear of hell; or by a strong confidence of the love of God and pardon of his sins; being ravished with heaven, filled with joy and seeming zeal for God's glory, without either knowledge of God, or love to him, or reverence for his presence, or desire of his favour as the highest good and blessedness in God himself; and after his false comfort, or fear of hell, begins to cease and his conscience is quieted, he *turns with the dog to his*

CHRISTIAN.

*ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.**

IV. That he having a spiritual sight of God and a sense of his glory and beauty, loves him with a supreme love and seeks the favour of God from the sense of the excellency of his glorious perfections, and the blessedness of an interest in his holy communion; and his heart feels an holy awe for his presence and glory, delighting in him superlatively; and is in his element when doing God's will, desiring nothing more than farther proficiency in

* Job lxi. 5, 6.

HYPOCRITE.

his own vomit, and with the sow to her wallowing in the mire, and is as worldly minded as ever before, retaining his delight in his lusts and idols and repairs to God because he dares not do otherwise.

V. That he prefers that religion, which will stand with the securing of his own estate, safety, profit, and advancement in this world, before any; making no scruple at all about altering some of his principles: And is quite indif-

CHRISTIAN.

in the divine life; yea, he makes it his constant endeavour to approve himself to a pure holy and omniscient God;—he loves what God loves, hates what he hates, and abandons all his idols, whether they are pleasant or advantageous, visible or invisible; now saying unto them, *get ye hence*; and chooses God alone for his portion and joy.

V. That he is for sincere religion, and adheres unto it in every station and relation, hazarding all for God; and there is no difficulty which can deter him from following Christ: He endeavours in all his conduct, both to God and man, as

HYPOCRITE.

indifferent whatever religion he embraces,—as long as it agrees with the temper of the multitude and his own interest, he will infallibly adhere to it; for he is of opinion that to be religious is a virtue, by whatever means, principles, or practices he becomes so; that it is in no wise unlawful to use all sorts of means to enrich himself, whether it be by wresting the scriptures, or playing the hypocrite, to please the generality, by whom he finds his own profit; this he says, is to be of a self-denying temper, and a sweet and winning deportment, which makes a man more
fit

CHRISTIAN.

as well in secret as openly, to live a life of conformity to God, in all the duties he requires of him, not esteeming *—the praise of men more than the praise of God*; no, but he professes his religion at all times, publicly and privately, without the least fear or dissimulation, even when in rags and contempt; and tho' all other men are against him, nay, tho' he should meet with the greatest enmity and opposition in this world, yet he neglects no known duty to avoid it; but is willing and ready to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain; or any other losses, crosses,
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HYPOCRITE.

fit for his business.—

That he follows Christ, not only for the loaves, (John vi.) but chooses religion as a tool to obtain and enjoy the goods of the world; and shows himself, not in mere effigy, but in the lively shape of a right down heathen * of an hypocrite, nay of the devil himself,—and even as Judas, being religious for the bag,—or Simon the Magician,—who was longing for the holy Ghost, that he might get money thro' his gift. O abominable cheat! what will be the sentence of such an hypocrite, from the mouth of the great judge in the last

CHRISTIAN.

sufferings and persecutions; yea, even death itself,—for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the gospel; and instead of being grieved thereat, he rejoices, even as the apostles rejoiced, that they were accounted worthy to *suffer shame for Christ's name.* *

Thus he denies himself in all things, whatsoever, that are offensive or displeasing unto God; and takes up any cross, that for his future advantage, Christ shall suffer to be laid upon him; knowing that this is the right mark of being his disciple, and that the cross, tho' it be never so heavy, is to continue but a short

* Gen. iii. Gen. xxxiv. 20, 24. Luke xi. 46, 47.

* Acts v. 41.

HYPOCRITE.

last day? indeed no less, than to be rebuked by the flames of devouring fire.

VI. That he observes but some of God's commandments, and neglects the rest; thus he serves himself rather than God, in that he does it not in obedience to God, much less from a sense of his infinite worth and excellency; nor from gratitude, for all his unspeakable goodness, to a wretch so exceedingly unworthy; but merely with

CHRISTIAN.

short time, and has nothing less, than a crown annexed to it! —A glorious and eternal crown, which all those shall most certainly obtain, who deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ.

VI. That hearing the several laws and commands, which the most just and holy God has set him, as a rule of his life, he endeavours to perform them all, and does every duty out of *faith, love* to God, and for *his glory*, making the service of God his daily employment and pleasure; and his continual study is, how to walk more strictly and conformably

HYPOCRITE.

with respect to himself, to get thereby a name and credit amongst men; or to recommend himself to God, and on account of his duties and reformation, to find acceptance thro' Christ, and satisfy his troublesome conscience;—being ready to renew his affections to his other Lords, as soon as his awakening apprehensions are worn off.

VII. That he likes to be engaged in worldly company, and for this therefore, he acquiesces only in the performance of some religious duties—praying for a few minutes morning and night, attending once a week on the worship

CHRISTIAN.

bly to all his laws, than ever; and knowing how liable he is to be deficient in it, with the more earnestness he desires a supply of strength from God's grace, to do his will perfectly and universally.

VII. That endeavouring to have a conscience always void of offence, he makes it the business of his life, to engage much of his thought and attention, upon spiritual things; he sets apart some time, to consider his actions, purposes and desires,

HYPOCRITE.

ship of God in public, &c, in the mean time he consumes his leisure hours in continually visiting as the fashion of the world requires, in vain amusement, or unprofitable company, and has no time or inclination for deep and serious thought; thus he remains in gross ignorance of God, his service, and scriptures.—Or he thinks every thing is good in its season,—in the one to be very jolly and light, in the other, modest and devout; in the one to attend balls and indecent companies, games of cards and dice, with other unlawful diversions, or in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wan-

CHRISTIAN.

desires, comparing them with the word of God; some time to discover, what are his principal defects and infirmities; and some time, to make supplication for pardon, and fresh supplies of grace, from Christ's fullness.—And if he take an hour for amusement, with holy and he employs it to renew his strength for the fight of faith; to discover his mistakes, and to increase more and more in the knowledge of the truth; making the exercise of religion, his chief business; and to draw near to God, his greatest delight.

HYPOCRITE.

mnests;—in the other
to attend worship,
and approach the
Lord's table: Both
these things he ima-
gines can go toge-
ther, the one be-
ing one, and the other
not neglected; and
thus to serve *two*
masters, God and mam-
mon, Christ and Be-
el.—This being
the fashionable re-
gion of the beau-
monde.

VIII. That in re-
gard to the second
table of the law, he
has his love to men
influenced by self-
ish principles; there-
fore takes most de-
light in those who
are more conforma-
ble to his own noti-
ons, sentiments and
dispositions, being
of his party, as
so kind and civil
to

CHRISTIAN.

VIII. That he
takes pleasure in
doing good to all
men, even his ene-
mies; and takes spe-
cial delight, in all
without distinction,
who really are par-
takers of the divine
nature, or at least
that he can charita-
bly count to be so;
—nay, he *makes sup-*
plications, prayers, in-
terces-

HYPOCRITE.

to him, and from whom he receives applause; but is full of malice against all others, flandering and speaking evil of them, nay very often depreciating their reputation, in order to raise or establish his own; and according to his fancy, he will not even pray, but for his own fort—as he can't bear the truth, he will neither hear it nor come near to those that would tell him the truth; as long as they think well of him, it will do; but as soon they begin to detect his hypocrisy, and convince him of his dangerous error, he will hate them, and backbite, if not, totally defame the character

CHRISTIAN.

tercession and giving of thanks for all men; and mourns for the sins of others, of those particularly in whom he is providentially concerned, as relations, churches, the whole people of the land wherein he lives with whom he is engaged, by manifold bonds, and means of conjunction, knowing that this is eminently approved of God: § and thereby he shews his zeal for the glory of God and compassion for the souls of men and their persons too; on the approach of calamities, being always willing to discharge

* 1 Tim. ii. 1. § Ezek. ix. 4, 5.

HYPOCRITE.

acter of the most
godly persons: And
so he may justly re-
member the words
of our Saviour, when
he saith, *For if ye
love them, which love
you, what reward have
ye! do not even the
publicans the same?**

IX. That he hates
the image of God,
the

CHRISTIAN.

the duty he una-
voidably owes to his
fellow-creatures:—
And instead of ha-
ting those that ten-
derly reprove, and
tell him the truth,
he will love them
the more; even
as some at the
time of Paul, whose
hearts were more
inflamed of love to
him, for those very
doctrines for which
the Galatians hated
him:—And he will
say with David, *Let
the righteous smite me,
it shall be a kindness;
and let him reprove me,
it shall be an excellent
oil, which shall not
break my head, for yet
my prayer also shall be
in their calamities.**

IX. That being a
partaker of the di-
vine

* Matt. v. 46.

* Ps. cxli. 5.

HYPOCRITE.

the moral perfections of his holiness and righteousness, his goodness and fidelity; he does not really in his heart hate iniquity as an infinite evil in the eyes of God, but for his own reputation, or because he cannot, or dares not sin for fear of hell, he abstains from it; and the appearance he has of holiness is constrained and forced, contrary to the natural tendency and bias of his soul: He dislikes the practice of self-denial, he cannot be pleased with an holy life;—this the hypocrite either is so great a stranger to, that he does not know what it means; or he calls it legal,

CHRISTIAN.

vine nature,—divine in its original, its tendency, and its resemblance, he has a principle in his heart which tends to God; and makes him like him, walk in righteousness and holiness: He hates sin, as sin, and because God hates it; he loves holiness, as holiness, because God delights in it. —The same mind is in him, which was also in Christ, in devoting himself wholly to God; his continual prayers, are for holiness; all his desires are to be like God, *to be holy as he is holy in all manner of conversation*; and no wonder, for he knows, that this is amongst the chief ends of Christ's death,

HYPOCRITE.

legal, and does not believe in Christ, that thro' him he may return home to God, that glorious being, and be consecrated to him forever ; and to obtain grace, that he may do his will: No, but he looks continually to Christ and free grace, firmly believing, that Christ has done all things for him; for this, therefore, he needs not to mind sin, to crucify his flesh, or to live in conformity to the law ; and so, instead of honouring, he dishonours Christ, and makes him a minister of sin ; instead of convincing a graceless heart of, he emboldens it in sin.

X. That he by all his

CHRISTIAN.

death, to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.

This, the religious Christian, feels to be the fittest and happiest thing in the world; and as such longs for it, and every day goes in the name of Christ, to have it increased and strengthened.--

X. That he, who hopes

HYPOCRITE.

his religious attainments, performances and seeming service, has nothing in view but heaven ; not such an one which consists in the deliverance from sin and perfect service of, and communion with God in glory, even as this was *the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Paul pressed for Philip ;* * no, but a poor kind of low and earthly heaven, consisting in ease, rest, safety, freedom from troubles or torments, and possession of joy and pleasures for ever.

Thus his heaven has more resemblance to that of a *Mahometan* than of a *Christian*, which agreeable to *Mahomet's*

* Phil. iii.

descrip-

CHRISTIAN.

hopes for heaven hereafter, has begun it in his soul here ; his heart is in some measure conformed to the divine nature and will, that he may be attempered and qualified for the enjoyment and employments of the heavenly world.——He walks in righteousness and holiness, as the beginning of perfection ; nay takes delight in true virtue and holiness itself, and prefers it before all worldly joy and pleasures, tho' a farther reward upon his sincere obedience never were to be expected ; and hates all kinds of iniquity, tho' upon its practice no punishment were to

HYPOCRITE.

description, left in the *Koran*, of his paradise, is no other than that of lust and sensuality indulged to the uttermost : And it clearly appears by his conduct that the service of God and a life of holiness are ungrateful and burdensome to him ; how then can such an one hope for the enjoyment of comfort and pleasure in the eternal service of God hereafter, which is the very nature of heaven ? This implies a contradiction.—And how can he *reap in joy*, who never did *sow in tears* ? and *return bringing sheaves in his bosom*, who never went forth *bearing precious seed* ? Scripture denies it.—

XI.

CHRISTIAN.

to be feared. So that *piety* is his salvation, and *holiness* his heaven ; and compassed with many infirmities, groaning under much deadness, and formality in duty ; liable to many involuntary surprises into sin, defective in his religious attainments, and in his conduct both towards God and man ; he longs to be more and more delivered *from his body of death*, from his sinful and depraved nature, and has a desire with *Paul*, to *depart and be with Christ*, * to enjoy a perfect communion with God in glory.

XI.

* Philip. i. 23.

HYPOCRITE.

XI. That his vain mind is puffed up with an haughty pleasing apprehension of its own attainments; or its presumptuous and imaginary faith and confidence of being a peculiar favourite of heaven; he is censorious and uncharitable if not unjust and deceitful, revengeful and implacable; addicted to lying and backbiting, full of that proud, pharisaical language,—*I thank God, I am not as other men*, boasting on his own excellency, and yet is not washed from his iniquity; destitute of true love to God, has no delight in, and is without the least conformity of heart and

CHRISTIAN.

XI. He admires and adores the astonishing riches of free distinguishing grace to such a guilty polluted creature as he is, shews more or less the fruits of his faith by a holy life and conversation, and being sensible of the great defects of his duties, the imperfections of his life, and the remaining sinfulness of his heart, he is humble low and vile in his own eyes, and therefore cannot, but esteem *others better than himself*; yea, being sensible of the misery of so many graceless sinners, has and shews at all times and on seasonable occasions, a great compassion for their souls in sincerely

HYPOCRITE.

and affections to him, (which is the sum of all religion); flattering himself with a rotten and groundless assurance, without having ever known, since he came to years of discretion and began to profess Christ, what it was to mortify one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against one temptation; and yet he wants not a strong persuasion of his interest in Christ; and from the same haughty principle he will not converse even with those who have a good opinion of him, being inclined to the enjoyment of his company and instruction, but says to them *touch not, stand*

CHRISTIAN.

cerely communicating to them of what he knows of true religion; or even as Paul, *willing to communicate, ** thereby answering the lesson of our Saviour, *And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren: †* Or knows that *he that winneth souls is wise, and the lips of the righteous feed many; †* and thus he labours not only to be exemplary in reformation, but to promote it also amongst others without distinction.

XII.

* 1 Tim. vi. 18. † Luke xxii. 32.
† Prov. x. 21. xi. 30.

HYPOCRITE:

stand by yourselves, for I am holier than you, keep at a distance; I don't count you worthy my company; and withdraws himself from giving them assistance, by advice, instruction, or action.—

XII. That his serving the Lord, attending worship, frequenting sacrament, saying prayers, singing hymns, being liberal to the poor, fervent and full of zeal to reform indecencies in worship, and superstitions; and all his ornamental shew, appearance of spirituality, figure of eminent piety, accompanied with a parcel of hypocritical actions, do merely proceed from an unre-

CHRISTIAN:

XII. That he verily values all ordinances of Christ, and duties of God's worship at a high rate, knowing that God hath appointed them as means only to convey his happiness; but he dislikes all kinds of hypocrisy, and sincerely endeavours, *to serve God with a perfect heart, and his whole worship is in spirit and in truth;—* his prayers are fervent, his attendance on the ordinances sincere

HYPOCRITE.

unregenerate heart, selfish, carnal principle, and unchristian temper, and are as far from being acts of real religion as any of the works of the open children of disobedience; and tho' highly esteemed by the ignorant and credulous world, they are abominable in the eyes of God, who *desireth truth in the inward parts*;—and in the last day the Lord of the harvest will say to the reapers, in regard to all those hypocrites, *gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them.* *

—CHRISTIAN.

sincere, and his soul truly for and to God;—in a word, all his study is to advance his glory.—So that an inward reverence may every where accompany an outward respect to his great and glorious name, and by that to his person and authority; and that all his creatures may worship and praise him, that his ways may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations; and that those who already know him, may live answerable to that knowledge, and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.

Thus I have given you a brief, yet just description, I think, of the temper and character of a religious Christian, and

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* Matt. xiii. 30.

of an Hypocrite.—Happy will it be for you, that read it, if that of the religious, be the temper of your soul; you may then be assured, that you possess the right and true religion, and as “distinct from all the daubings of Pharisaical outside, or hypocritical delusion, as the genuine brilliant differs from imitative paste.” This is the religion manifested in scriptures, which Moses and the prophets, which Christ and his apostles mutually did teach; and which, as to the substance of it, has been continually confirmed by the blessed experience of the children of God, in all the successive ages of the church.

This is the religion by which, those who are dead in sin, are quickened, have the law *written in their hearts*; * they fear the Lord, with a filial fear, and keep his *commandments*, which is the essence of religion, or which Solomon calls the *whole duty of man*, and necessarily proceeds from our union to Christ by faith, whereby we receive him as our Sanctifier as well as Saviour, and earnestly seek after the renewing, strengthening and quickening influences of His blessed Spirit; which undoubtedly will produce love to God,
express

* Eph. ii. 1. Heb. viii. 10.

expressing itself in affectionate thoughts
 of him, in strict fidelity to him, in a
 careful observation of our charge, in a
 holy reverence for his presence, and in
 serving him with the spirit; thereby not
 only to shew our gratitude for all the
 kindnesses bestowed upon us, especially
 in Christ Jesus our blessed redeemer, but
 for his intrinsic worth and excellency;
 to glorify so great a God in our spirit
 and in our body; i. e. not that we poor
 creatures can contribute any glory or
 perfection to God, which he had not be-
 fore; no, this is impossible; he is and
 has in himself the perfection of all per-
 fections: The homage of worshippers
 adds no more to the divine Majesty,
 than so many beholders to the sun;
 hence the very reasonable question of
 Job is, chap. xxii. 2. *can a man be profitable*
to God, as he that is wise is profitable to him-
self? Is it a favour to the Almighty, that thou
art righteous, and is there any profit to him that
thou makest thy way perfect? Since all our
 service, of God, only terminates in our
 selves, to bring us the nearer to himself.
 —Neither does it consist in glorifying
 God merely by outward performances,
 and solemnities of religious worship;
 tho' they are fit expressions of our honour
 to God's glorious name, and promote the
 inward

inward sense of it, yet the internal religion is particularly required. 1 Chro. xxviii. 9. Deut. x. 12.—So that to glorify God, is *first*, In a common sense, after having in some measure a right apprehension of his transcendent and glorious excellencies, to confess and express it, with becoming respect and reverence.—*secondly*, In a particular sense, when we do this *in our spirit and in our body*.

1. *In our spirit*—when we have such a view of God's glorious perfections, especially revealed in Christ Jesus, his wisdom, power, justice, holiness, goodness, &c. that we can think no other but that he is worthy to be loved, praised and magnified above all things, Pf. viii. 1.—When we have our principal delight and contentment in him, Pf. lxxiii. 25.—When we make God's blessed communion the measure of all our desires and affections, Pf. xxxviii. 10. xlii. 2. 3.—When we carefully endeavour to keep this sight, esteem of, and pleasure and satisfaction in God, with a panting desire after his communion, *serving him acceptably with reverence and godly fear.**—But,

2. *In our body*, God is glorified, *when we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service,*

* Heb. xii. 28.

† Rom. xii. 1.

*service,—Which must be kept under, and given up to God and his service, yielding our members as instruments of righteousness, and to bring our whole body into subjection to the will of God; * in short, glorifying God in spirit and in body, is to live as those, that are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. †* And compare herewith, nay I beg your diligent attention, to what we find in the revelation of John, † where God sending the everlasting gospel to be preached, we all are warned to fear God and give glory to him; and instead of worshipping idols and images, to worship the true God, according to his will revealed in his word; and in the xii. verse, *Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; that is, who discover themselves sincere in their profession, by obeying the commandments of God, and truly believing in the Lord Jesus Christ; so that thereby the characteristick of a real Christian appears to be, faith in Christ, and obedience to the will of God in all things, which never can be separated, where they are sincere.* This

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

† 1 Pet. ii. 9.

† Chap. xiv. 7.

This I say is the temper, this the conduct of a religious Christian ; and you are just so far a servant of God, and no farther, than that pure holy heavenly and Christ like disposition, as a fruit of the divine Spirit, and of your union by faith to Christ, more or less really manifests itself in you ; and such an one, nay him alone, our Saviour will receive into eternal glory, to be ever loving, admiring, serving and praising the blessed God ; to be following the lamb, whether soever he goeth ; to be employed, day and night, without ceasing, in his temple, and in the nearest and tenderest communion of soul with him, for ever :—

*For blessed is the man, that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.**

O happy ! happy then, ye people of God, who seriously can say, that ye have renounced all other things, and given up yourselves to the Lord and his service, in the manner aforesaid ; but if ye compare yourselves and attainments, with the service of the Lord in its spiritual nature and divine strictness, I don't doubt but you will be fully convinced too, of your deficiency, carelessness, laziness and sloth ; what ought ye to do then,

in this your state and condition? Shall
 you be but content with a sight of your
 deadness, unwatchfulness and neglect
 of that *service*, to which you are so indis-
 pensably obliged, by all the secret ways
 of Gods providence and grace with you?
 Shall ye acquiesce in a mere conviction
 of your want of love to God, of zeal for
 his glory, of delight in his perfections,
 and of gratitude for all his kindnesses,—
 above thousands and millions!—bestowed
 upon you? shall you be easy under this
 your carelessness about Gods honour
 and interest, under your inactivity in
 his service, under your disesteem for the
 God that angels love!—without being
 ashamed and confounded? Nay, shall ye
 not condemn all those infirmities and
 remainders of sin within you? or satisfy
 your selves with such thoughts as that
 these are the general complaints of Gods
 children, that the best of them are but
 weak and feeble, and never can arrive to
 an absolute perfection? No, no, Christi-
 ans, lie down in the dust, mourn and
 weep, and loath, and abhor yourselves,
 for treating so great a God in such a
 manner; turn, turn to him, and in the
 name of Christ, bow your knees before
 him, with an awful sense of your intire
 unworthiness of his favour, yet with an
 hum-

humble hope, and confidence in his infinite grace and mercy; praying for the remission of your sins, for the sanctifying operation of the divine Spirit, for his assistance, power and favour; that ye may *walk worthy the vocation wherewith ye are called to serve the Lord with fear*, to love him supremely, delight in him ultimately, and observe his law continually; shewing by a holy life and conversation, that ye are the children of God, a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness unto his marvellous light*; * and that, not merely with your lips, but with your deeds and all your actions, so that it may appear by your conversation, that ye are sensible of God's glorious perfections, your *light so shining before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven*: † When ye shew your esteem for God's holiness, to be holy in all manner of conversation; ‡—When ye have an holy veneration for his righteousness, not to kindle his anger by sinning against him; when ye resign yourselves wholly to his wisdom and providence, when ye count him only all-sufficient, to satisfy your desires, *ha-*
ving

* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

† Matt. v. 16.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 15.

ving none in heaven but him, and none upon
 earth that ye desire besides him,—“ preferring
 the advancement of the divine life be-
 fore the gratification of the animal, pa-
 tience before prosperity, communion
 with God before the favour of men, spi-
 ritual purity before temporal pleasures,
 humility before honour, the denial of
 yourselves before the approbation of
 others, the advancement of God's image,
 before the advancement of your own
 names, an opportunity of exercising gra-
 cious dispositions before the exercising of
 any temporal power or secular autho-
 rity, and in a word, the displaying of
 the beauty, glory and perfections of God,
 before health, wealth, liberty, livelihood,
 and life itself :” Lo believers, if ye live
 so before the most High, the genuine-
 ness of your service will be evident and
 plain, and by those rational and scrip-
 tural marks, be assured of your gracious
 state.—But that ye may obtain a capa-
 city for such a spiritual activity, and at-
 tain to that service and heavenly con-
 versation with God, which your soul
 desires ; ye must continually walk by
 faith in the Son of God, for it is by faith
 in Christ “ we have access to the throne
 of grace,—that our persons and services
 find acceptance with God,—that our cor-

ruptions are mortified, and our hearts
 cleansed,—that we are enabled to tread
 the world and its idle vanities under our
 feet,—that we enjoy the consolations and
 pleasures of a religious life, yea by
 faith in Christ that we can be steadfast in
 our religious course and enabled to per-
 sever to the end.”——Therefore, will ye
 walk intimate with him ? ye must walk
 by faith in Christ—He alone is the light
 of men, a *Councillor* to advise, a *Prophet* to
 instruct, a *Priest* to atone for, a *King* to
 govern, an *Head* to guide, a *Treasure* to
 enrich, a *Fountain* to cleanse, a *Sanctuary*
 to cover, and an *Anchor* of hope to com-
 fort and establish them.——Come, come
 then, O believers ! Continually exercise
 faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, renounce
 all your own wisdom, strength and good-
 ness ; trust in him alone, praying for
 fresh supplies to relieve your particular
 wants and necessities,—cordially resign
 yourselves to his wise and gracious au-
 thority and government, yielding your-
 selves to the rule of his Spirit, Word, and
 Providence ; nay, if you have any love
 for the God that made you, any kindness
 for the Christ that died for you, shew it
 by obedience to the Spirit that comes to
 us in the name and in the love both of
 the Father and the Son, and for this
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therefore not only worthy to be obeyed, but also for his own sake, upon the account of his nature and office, as being co-equal with the Father and the Son, in nature and dignity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 23.—And sent in the quality of an Advocate, to help us to pray, to indite our requests for us, to teach us what and how to ask of God, in a word, to sanctify, comfort and preserve us;—and thus we are indispensably obliged, upon the account of his nature, office, and the benefits received by him, to honour and serve him as well as the Father and the Son; or that we give distinct glory to the three Persons in the Godhead, worshipping God in the Son, by the Spirit. *

This being the only way to be blessed in the abundance of God's grace and mercy, with every needful good:—Walk therefore in it, and keep up a strict and continual guard over your thoughts and affec-

* That I here particularly admonish Christians to esteem the blessed Spirit is, because I find a great sloth and carelessness amongst them, in not giving due honour to that divine Person, to worship him as the true God for his own nature's sake, and to apply to him as their Advocate, praying him for his continual influence and assistance, and for new supplies of quickening and strengthening grace—which neglect indeed is a grieving of the Spirit, and a scandalous ingratitude for so many inestimable benefits, received from him, and ought to make them careful to do so no more, lest they cause him to withdraw the light of his countenance from them.—

affections, that they may not wander from God, but perpetually be fixed on him, as the full and complete object of your desire and hope, your love and joy; let him be in your thoughts the first in the morning and the last at night; view and be sensible of his glory and beauty, in being what he is, and of his condescending mercy in the infinitely lovely and ever loving Jesus, bestowed upon you in particular, until your soul is filled with wonder and inflamed with love!—Yea go on with joy and triumph in the service of so great and gracious a Master,—have and keep up a constant communion and fellowship with him, and make a daily progress in this fellowship, so as to be conformed to the divine image more and more: For to use the words of a certain divine, “tho’ a person can but be a new creature, yet there are some that are more conformed to the divine image than others, and will after death be admitted to a greater degree of blessedness,” consequently the new creature must increase in the spiritual stature of its Lord, and grow up into him in all things;* hence, it was the hearty wish of the apostle Peter, that grace and peace

* Eph. iv.

peace be multiplied unto the believers, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,* viz. 1. The grace of holiness, and the multiplying of it ; because all believers do not receive the same measure of holiness, and to whatever degree they might arrive in this world, they can never obtain an absolute perfection, (as you will find more fully demonstrated in the *third* discourse of this treatise) for this therefore the earnest prayer of Paul was ;—*that the Lord would grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God.* † 2. The grace of perseverance :—It is true the Lord is always the same, and faithful on his side, who cannot deny himself, tho' we are unfaithful ; but it is also necessary to be on our guard being ensnared by satan or our own flesh, and becoming backsliders *loosing our first love* ; hence then his prayer of *grace multiplying*, was, that

* 2 Pet. i. 2. † Eph. iii. 16, 19.

that they may be *steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as they know that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.* * 3. Notwithstanding a believer keeps himself from evil, yet he is exposed to doubts and fears, and has not always the same lively hope and trust, or inward experience of God's favour; for this therefore, he wishes his fellow believers a *multiplying of sealing grace*, that they may be *saved by hope, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*; † and justly we may join to it. 4. A *multiplying of all the particular favours*, the Lord according to free grace, will bestow on his dear children, especially under the dispensation of the gospel, all of them being included in the earnest soul's desire of Paul, *now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the holy Ghost.* ‡ 5. Finally, he wishes the believers a *multiplying of grace and peace*, that they having sincerely *finished their course*, may not only depart in peace, but also find a large *entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ*, §—and so hereby the necessity of a daily progress in knowledge and grace, clearly appears; besides other scripture testimonies which we could

* 1 Cor. iv. 58, † Rom. v. 2. ‡ Rom. xv. 13. § 1 Pet. i. 11.

could alledge, how they go on, as the psalmist saith, *from strength to strength*, or the apostle Paul, *they pass from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord*, so that it is evident that such a growth in grace, cannot be by our own strength, but is owing to the influence, of divine grace, the work or the blessed spirit, which sows the seed, and gives its increase.—Wherefore Jesus saith, John v. 5. *without me ye can do nothing*, and Isaiah xl. 29. *the Lord giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength*.—Farther, observe that this growth in grace, does not consist in mere outward performances, proficiency in speculative knowledge, or instructing others therein,—which may appear in babes, as well as fathers in Christ, nay even in the unregenerate; and if the converted sinner sometimes experiences God's particular favour, which is commonly joined with an earnest desire after true piety,—neither can this, be a progress in holiness, because he then is carried like a child in the arms of the Lord;—but it consists in the increase of a spiritual light, and such exercise of the mind, by which the truth as it is in Christ, is the better understood and more lively experienced; and because the divine light, cannot irradiate

diate the soul of a believer without giving him a clearer view of himself (*for whatsoever doth make manifest is light*) he sees more of his inward corruptions and bad disposition, which he did not see before. Thus then, instead of decaying and backsliding, as he very often imagines, *he grows in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; and by this light infused into his soul, and by a clearer experience of the divine truths, his heart is more fixed on the Lord, its desires are more fervent after him, he is more free of the world and nearer to God;—He gets more acquainted with God,* even as a friend with a friend, his *eye seeth him*; † he has the greater love and cleaves more to him, he walks more with God in private, and constantly endeavours to please him, Ps. cxvi. verse 1. and to be parted from him is his soul's grief, being willing to be continually with him, Ps. lxxiii. 23.—Farther he that *grows in grace*, lives more by faith in Christ, becomes rooted and built up in him, and as he has therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so he walks in, and follows close after him; whereby he learns to know God in the face or (agreeable to the Greek) person of Jesus, whom he wants

* Job xxii. 21.

† Job xlii. 5.

every moment, because there is no *growth* in grace without him, John xv. 43.—but the more he exercises faith in him, the more he will increase in holiness,—which will also appear by his life and conversation, in the practice of all Christian duties, that he *being dead to sin lives unto righteousness*; his spiritual life is growing in beauty, strength and splendour; he becomes more settled in his heavenly walk and communion with God, his conduct being more consistent, calm, prudent, careful, humble, meek, free, self-denying, charitable and compassionate, in respect to himself and his fellow believers; in a word, such a growing believer, earnestly attempts by the concurrence of the Spirit, to shew and behave himself in the whole course of his life, as a Christian indeed.—But if this be so, let me excite you to walk in the same manner and beware not to “run into Antinomian principles,” as we find some have done, and would to God there were not some, even amongst those who pretend to be sound Divines, that “(as well as men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith) deny all growth in grace in a believer, or any marks of grace to be laid down in the scriptures of truth.”—O, abominable opinion! what

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else can be the consequence of it, but the greatest carelessness and sloth, in the service of God, with all the loss of confidence and joy in the Lord;—besides, thereby to be exposed to *seducing Spirits*,—therefore I still say, beware of so dangerous a notion, and make daily progress or advances in the *divine* life, walking close with your God:—Then ye *shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit, in his season, whose leaf never withers, and whatsoever ye do, shall prosper*; and after a short time ye shall come into the presence of the most High, most Holy, and all-sufficient God, to enjoy his blessed and everlasting communion, in glory.—But,

What will become of thee irreligious sinner! who hatest the true service of God, who canst not bear genuine religion, who art living in the enjoyment of the pleasures of sense and not by love, who art serving foolish and hurtful lusts instead of presenting thy body, soul and spirit, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; or under pretence of *serving the Lord*, playest the hypocrite whose life, under all thy zeal for religion, seeming faith in Christ, love to God, interest in the Redeemer, is earthly, sensual, devilish; who hast not the least

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generation in thine heart, for the glorious Majesty, dost not care for God and his amiable perfections, whose heart by thy false confidence of pardon, and the divine favour, by boasting of extraordinary impulses and communications, remains enmity against God and his law, whose deceitful pretences, hypocritical duties, flaming zeal, and attending God's ordinances, all proceed from a principle of mere self-love, a fright of hell, or a confidence and imaginary notion of thy happy state of heaven, without esteem of, desire after, delight in, and conformity with the golden rule of Christ, *to love God and your neighbour as yourself*, as being the fruits of the Spirit, the efficacy of unfeigned faith, the essence of religion, the infallible evidence of our interest in Christ, and the unmoveable ground of hope for heaven, what will become of thee, I must repeat again, irreligious sinner? who hast not known, revered and loved, but neglected and dishonoured such a great, holy and righteous God, who hast given myself up to the practice of all iniquity—who hast despised a devout, holy, humble, spiritual, watchful, self-denying life—who goest on in a course of sinning under all the goodness the Lord has bestowed upon thee, who hast hardened
 thine

thine heart under all the instructions, reproofs and admonitions of his faithful servants, nay hated them for their fidelity, in a word, who hast made a jest of religion, and ridiculed all those who really profess and practise it.—I must tell thee, *the end of those things is death, and with a lie in thy right hand thou shalt perish,** if this continue thy governing temper, whilst the Lord Jesus in flaming fire will take vengeance on them, that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; †—or does an impenitent, unclean, careless sinner imagine, tho' he has slighted the true knowledge, love, fear, service and adoration of the most Holy, yet that he can be admitted into his presence? far from it, for *the pure in heart only shall see God, ‡* whilst nothing can enter the sanctuary where his honour dwelleth, *which defileth or worketh abomination; §*—“ Much easier it is to suppose an honest man, delighting himself in intimacy with a branded knave than that the perfections of God should ever admit the least communion with any one, that loves sin, allows himself

* Rom. vii. 21. † 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. ‡ Matt. v. § Revel. xii. 17.

“ in any evil way, or is indifferent whether his corruptions are mortifying in him or no ;” nay, if this could be, then the Lord so holy and glorious would (with reverence must it be spoke) equalise himself to the sinner, deny his justice and holiness, make void his threatenings, annihilate his truth and there would be no difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him, that serveth God and him that serveth him not, but eat the same fruit of their doings, which would be repugnant to his truth and justice.

Thus then evidently appears, that those who do not serve the Lord a-right in Christ Jesus by his blessed Spirit, in conformity to his holy law, never can hope for heaven ; and may not,—as long as they are destitute of real religion, without which they have no interest in the covenant of grace, nor right to call the Lord their God, nor freedom of trusting on him, as we see in the prophesy of Isaiah,* to be allowed only those *that fear the Lord, that obey the voice of his servant*, and besides this what can be more vain, than to hope for salvation, and in the mean time not to *obey that form of doctrine which is delivered us*? † to hope for the remission of sin, or to be assured

* Chap. i. 10.

† Job viii. 13, 14.

assured of it already, and at the same time to despise Christ in his mediatorial offices?—to hope for the enjoyment of eternal life hereafter, and not to desire it here in the manner and way the Lord will give it?—*The life is in the Son, he that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life,**—consequently those that hope for eternal life, must here needs receive and live in and for Christ—for a spiritual and Godly life is the beginning of eternal life, without it they have not Christ, not life, either temporal, spiritual or eternal, but are and will remain in a state of death and everlasting damnation,—and tho' they would presumptuously put their confidence on him, yet they will be confounded, for *the hypocrites hope shall perish, his hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be a spiders web; †* finally depart from hence in dreadful expectation and bitter out-cries of horror and remorse, when the righteous vengeance of the great Judge will doom them forever, while the *wages of sin is death, ‡* and those that did join with God's enemies, and whose heart has been the servant of sin, will have their portion with them in the *everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. §*—Well then O sinner,

and

* John v. 11, 12. † Job viii. 13, 14. ‡ Rom. vi. 23. § Matt. xxv. 41.

and all ye, that never have served the Lord with a filial fear, if you will escape such a dreadful judgment and trust at all times on God and his salvation, then you must *serve him*, with reverence, and *fear him*, with obedience, this the greatness of his Majesty requires ;—*O Lord thou art great and thy name is great in might, who would not fear thee O King of nations, so to thee doth it appertain ;**—and the Lord hath made all things to himself : †—For this therefore it is the greatest equity, that all creatures should praise him, both the rational and irrational, so as they are exhorted *to do*. †—And if a man, (as being a rational creature, and created to this end only, that he should serve and glorify his Creator, and perform those things in this world, which irrational creatures cannot do) devote himself to that which is no God, yea even to sin and Satan, can any thing be more idolatrous, more dreadful? *will a man rob God?* the Lord asked the Jews, *who despised his name, yet ye have robbed me ;* §—ought we not to be astonished? what is more indecent and punishable?—This is to tread in the steps of the Gentiles; of whom Paul saith, that they did *serve the*

* Jer. x. 6.

† Prov. xvi. 4.

† Ps. cliv.

§ Matt. iii. 8.

*the creature more than the Creator, who is
 blessed forever ; **—nay to serve and obey
 God is the demand of the law, which
 obliges us to a constant obedience. “ The
 “ great God has not laid down his right
 “ of sovereignty and dominion over us,
 “ by affording us a medium of reconcili-
 “ liation to himself and a title to eternal
 “ happiness ; but rather has that way
 “ laid us under further and stronger
 “ obligations to obedience, our freedom
 “ from the curses and severe demands
 “ of the moral-law, is so far from free-
 “ ing us of our duty towards it, as a
 “ rule of practice, or excusing us from
 “ a careful observance of its precepts,
 “ that the glorious liberty we are made
 “ partakers of, is given us for this
 “ very end,” that we may *serve God*
without fear ; i. e. without the servile
and offending fear of a slave, but with
the dutiful and ingenuous fear of a child,
in holiness and righteousness ; “ and the
 “ greater discoveries God has been pleas-
 “ ed to make of his glorious perfections,
 “ the greater manifestations he has made
 “ of his goodness and mercy, the grea-
 “ ter are our obligations to obedience,”
 and the law must be preached and read,

that

* Rom. i. 25.

that we thereby may learn our native depravity, former wickedness, remaining sinfulness ; and thus our continual need of a redeemer and sanctifier may appear, and set us upon repairing to God thro' Jesus Christ for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace, or as the Heidelberg Catechism saith, " that we constantly endeavour and pray to God for the grace of the holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God : " * — And shall I add once more, the Psalmist shews us, how the promises of the everlasting testament are *for those that fear God*, — *the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him* ; † namely, upon those, that have embraced Christ, both as their Redeemer and Governor, both as their Saviour and King, and experienced the power of their faith upon their affections, subduing their lusts, crucifying their flesh, and living with a reverential awe before the omnipresence and omniscience of the most High, making them cautious and afraid to offend that God, whom they believe *to be of purer eyes than to behold iniquity* ; ‡ — a faith which drives them to God, to give him

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their

* Question 115.

† Ps. ciii. 17.

‡ Hab. i. 13.

their dearest and tenderest love, transporting their soul into ravishment upon the sight of his beautiful excellencies, and farther perfect communion with the glorious God, and things he hath laid up and prepared for those that love him—a faith which makes them rejoice in that Saviour they have not seen, *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, and makes them willing to despise the world and overcome it, using it only as their Servant, while God alone is their Master, desiring to obey him in all, tho' it would be against their worldly interest, and expose them to the danger of losing their estate, place, office, friends, and dearest thing they have;—a faith which cries day by day to be advanced to higher degrees of perfection; nay ambition itself does not count honour more eagerly, than this seeks to be increased,—lastly, a faith which elevates their thoughts, and makes them study how to promote God's glory, and do much good in their generation, willing to suffer for Christ, and choose rather to be reproached for his name's sake, than to enjoy all the riches the world can give.

What do you think reader, of such a faith, I don't doubt but if you take it in due consideration, it will prove to be gold

gold instead of gilt, corn instead of tares, and a faith most separated from presumption, or every thing called faith, whether it be blasphemous Antinomians boast, (by which he horribly believes God is no avenger of the love and practice of sin in them) who pretend to see their union with Christ; or whether it be the blind formal Pharisees, deceitful profession of dependance on Christ, it is equally vile and refuse, it is non-sense, it is blasphemy to suppose any manner of blessing or grace can be derived to the soul, from a lifeless opinion, in which the heart has nothing to do;" whilst on the other hand, this our faith is of the true eagle kind, and of the right stamp, which can stand the test, and from whence naturally flow all duties; the Lord requires to do them, from a principle of filial fear, supreme love, and with a view to advance his glory, without which it is no service of God, nor can be acceptable to him.— And now reader, whoever you are and might have hitherto been—enslaved to the service of the world, the devil and your own lusts, let me advise you, in the name of the eternal God, your Creator and Benefactor, and for your own salvations sake, to renounce and forsake your former

former masters, and now dedicate yourself to the service of him, that made you, for that very purpose to serve him ; nay, as you are a man, and owe civility to all creatures that have the signature of man upon them ; be but so kind, as to give a due attention to what I am going to ask, and to allow it some serious thoughts—have you a rational soul, or not ? if you have, why then will you longer attend to, and pursue after things either intrinsic, or inferior to your noble and intelligent being, as your soul is ? in the meantime carelessly forgetting or wilfully rejecting your main happiness, principal end, and proper perfection ? why will you so stubbornly neglect the service of the most High ? there it is impossible for any rational creature to be happy, unless he be holy, and to enjoy God, unless he *serves him* ; besides it is the finest “ beauty and glory upon that pious soul, that shines with the image and brightness of God upon it—nay I dare say the splendour of the sun in its greatest strength and altitude, is a pitiful glimmering if it be compared with the day star of religion or true service of God, that even in this life arises, in the heart : or if you will, in the prophet’s stile, the sun of righteousness, which ariseth with healing

ing in his wings upon them that fear the name of the Lord."——O what pure and holy inclinations, what spiritual and powerful motions, what high and heavenly delights are there in the divinely enlightened soul! "It may be said to rest in its love, and yet that love will not suffer it to rest, but is still carrying it out into a more intimate union with its beloved object."——O reader, be convinced of your folly and unreasonableness, and do you desire to be really and truly happy and partake in *the inheritance of the saints in light*? let the service of God be your daily, your constant employment and pleasure—but whatever *service* you perform unto him, take care that you don't do it presumptuously and carelessly, but *with fear*, which includes, 1. A right apprehension of God, in a measure, and a sense of his infinite glory. 2. A sight of our own sinfulness and insufficiency. 3. Of Christ the great Mediator. 4. Faith in him. 5. Supreme love to God, and 6. Sincere obedience to all his commandments in Christ Jesus, by the efficacious influence of the blessed Spirit, which commonly is called the *fear of God*, because, notwithstanding all the duties of religion, necessarily must proceed from a pure supreme love to God, yet they are always in the
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religious Christian accompanied with a reverential *fear* for his greatness, and a holy *trembling* for his word.—Therefore think not to put God off with fancy, instead of faith, or with outward performances, instead of real duties, but remember that he demands a *service in Spirit and in truth*, and faith, *my son give me thine heart*; nay religion is seated only in the heart.—The external works of the generality esteemed devout, decent and charitable, are usually dissembled and imitated by art, and acted over by mimical apostish Pharisees, who find nothing at all of the gentle and mighty heat, nor the divine and noble life of religion in their own soul; or are done by the power of quick and raised fancy, proceeding from nothing but low and carnal conceits of God, Christ and heaven, which they fall in love with, and think they do even taste of the powers of the world to come, when indeed it is nothing but selfishness they feed upon—and “such counterfeit and fanciful religion is of a fleeting and vanishing nature, which will fade in time, tho’ never so specious and flourishing, swift and rapid; all devils will pass away; nay that religion, which men put on for a cloak, will wear out and drop into rags, if it be not presently thrown

thrown by as a garment out of fashion,"
 and the shameful issue of dissemblers, the
 tinkling snuff in which all this candle-
 light religion ended, you may see in
Jeſu, whoſe ſeeming righteouſneſs was
 founded in ambition and cruelty; in *Joſh*,
 whoſe piety and devotion was grounded
 upon a good and virtuous education; in
Saul, whoſe zeal for the worſhip of God
 and fat ſacrifices were growing upon a
 root of ſuperſtition, as Samuel interprets
 it, 1 Sam. xv. 22. from which their reli-
 gion being of an earthly and ſelfiſh con-
 ſtitution, they apoſtatized and became as
 irreligious and ungodly as ever; to this
 purpoſe I might eaſily " record the hiſ-
 tories of many, eſpecially great men, who
 have ſpeedily, if not diſdainfully thrown
 off that ſemblance of piety, which they
 had put on for a vizard, during their
 probationary-ſhip for advancement, the
 better to accompliſh their ſelfiſh deſigns,
 and to be poſſeſſed of ſome baſe ends of
 their own,"—and tho' others ſhould per-
 ſevere in their formality and hypocrify
 to the laſt, ſo as we cannot deny but an
 hypocrite may continue fair and ſpeci-
 us to the very end of his life, nay per-
 aps die a Pharifee, yet it is tranſitory
 and fading, " and if it were ſoundly
 ſaulted and battered with perſecutions
 and

and temptations, no doubt would actually vanish and disappear ; but where the grace of God has begotten a divine Principle and Spirit of true religion in a soul, there it will never utterly fail, for there is the central force, even of heaven itself ; still attracting and carrying the soul in its motions thitherward, until it has lodged it in the very bosom and heart of God," for God's goodness and love in Christ towards his people, is infinite and unspeakable, and he is faithful in accomplishing his promise, so that he will never leave or forsake them, Heb. xii. *he will keep them by his power unto salvation* according to the apostle, 1 Pet. i. 5. For this therefore, examine yourself, O sinner or all those that pretend to faith ! examine the temper of your heart, with regard to God and his service—do you find there in some measure a right apprehension of him, a sense of his infinite glory ? does this knowledge make you humble and vile in your own eyes ? does it discover to you your spiritual poverty and impotency, and the need of Christ and his atonement ? does it make you prize *Christ* above all, and engage you *to count all things dross and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ* ? does it make you fly to Christ, to accept of him

or to be justified by free grace, thro' the
 redemption which is in Christ? does it
 fill you with ardour to be made parta-
 cers of his holiness? and for your far-
 ther assistance, inquire what power your
 faith hath upon your affections? does it
 purify your heart, and drive away those
 lusts that have taken up their residence
 there? do you find a newness of life
 within you, to live not more after the
 flesh, but after the Spirit? do you know
 experimentally what is meant to be a
 partaker of the divine nature, to have
 fellowship with the Father and his Son
 Jesus Christ? do you have a disposition
 to love God supremely, for being what
 he is? do you fear his omnipresence and
 omniscience? and is it your constant de-
 sire to live in a perfect conformity to all
 what he commands, imitating Christ in
 his holy life and conversation? do you
 pray with fervency and importunity, to
 receive grace for grace, out of Christ's
 fullness, to be more and more active for
 God? wholly devoted to his will? If
 faith hath thus warmed your heart, sin-
 ner, and if you find these foot-steps of
 God, more or less, within you; these are
 the real marks of a religious Christian;
 not the flights of fancy, but glorious
 and reviving truths, the declarations of

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God,

God, and ornaments fit for you to appear before the great tribunal ;—but on the other side, if your faith, your service, or religion, hath never been of that effect upon your heart and life ; if it never did make you break forth into celebrations and admirations of God's glorious attributes? if it never hath inflamed your heart to a supreme love to God ; if it never hath given you a view and sense of the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of the love of God, and the infinite bonds thereby laid upon you, to shew your gratitude, by loving and living to him forever ; if it has never made your corruption abate, and your extravagant desires and passions fall ; if your sins grow strong, under the shadow of it, and the rod of iniquity blossoms and bears fruit,—if it has not worked humility, shame, sorrow (*which is after a godly sort*) in your heart ; no delight in the words and ways of God, no relish in spiritual things, no carefulness to please God ; whatever your attainments may otherwise be ; whatever you profess of Christ, whatever you believe of the gospel ; what party soever you side with, and how many specious duties you may perform, without a real and spiritual communion with God, and holy conversation

fation; it is but a varnish, a paint of religion, and in the conclusion you will find yourself disappointed, and ashamed of your hope.—O poor and presumptuous sinner, don't bless yourself longer in your heart, neither conclude yourself secure, while all the threatenings and curses of God's law are sounding in your ears, and lie indeed directly against you—don't apply to yourself a thousand promises in which you have no share, nor let a vain dream of security and happiness, plunge you in an everlasting ruin; but strive at the true service of God and Christian Religion, which is not a notion, but a nature, not wrapped up in books, or laid up in men's brains, nor consisting in orthodox opinions, honest society, fair profession, popular and sanctimonial form, or the most plausible performances; "the soul being in the meantime alienated from the life of God, and feeding upon some earthly trash or other, as carnal will, self-interest, secular greatness, worldly pomp and finery, self-pleasing, or any kind of self-exaltation, which destroys the nature, powers, and vigour of it, and keeps it under a perpetual languor." No, no; but religion is laid in the very constitution of the soul; a new principle, implanted by God in
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its highest powers, and rendering them as like to God himself, as such a creature can resemble its Creator; which is nothing less, than the image of God in the soul, that true knowledge and sense of God and his perfections, with all the practice of righteousness and holiness.†—This was the same character which was in David viz. *A man after God's own heart*; *—conformable to his image, compliant with his will, and studious of his glory—for that is the man, under what name soever he goes, or of what party or faction soever he is, that has the mark of a religious Christian;—away then with all your low and base thoughts of religion, and its happiness; away with your imaginary Christianity, and misapprehensions of the blessed Jesus, as if he were but a Saviour to rescue you from hell, and not from the power of sin; to make you happy without living holy here, in communion with God—and know that there is no other happiness to be got, but in the exercise of that religion, by which you maintain and increase a real fellowship with God: for in God alone the soul's happiness consists.—Come then I beseech you, whoever you are, be not

† Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.

* 1 Sam. xii.

not mistaken in a matter of so great importance, but endeavour to know and practise true and real religion;—the religion revealed in the bible, and which alone is agreeable to so great and glorious a God—and that you may be successful herein, humble yourselves before God; own the power of doing it, to be from him, who *gives us to will and to do after his good pleasure*; and know that virtue is not the effect of our own strength, but of divine Grace, by the work of the Spirit, which removes our natural blindness, stubborn and sensual inclinations, and enables us to an easy and cheerful compliance with God's commands, by Paul called, *to be strengthened with might by the Spirit, in the inner man*; *—therefore will you perform and pursue true service to God, uniformly and constantly. 1. *Pray the Lord for the illuminating Spirit, to have a clear and sensible view of his glory, and to be filled with the knowledge of his will? let it be your constant exercise every day, to call upon the father of all lights, and the giver of all wisdom, saying, shew me thy way O Lord, and teach me thy paths—O lead me forth in thy truth, and learn me; for thou art the God of my Salvation.*

2. Exer-

* Eph. iii. 16.

2. Exercise yourself in imploring him day by day, that you may see your sin and deformity, its baseness and malignity, as committed against the most holy and glorious God, a merciful and bountiful being. 3. Daily apply yourself to the throne of grace, that you may see the need of Christ and his atonement; and experience *what is the exceeding greatness of Christ's power towards them that believe*; and look then continually to him, as that *only name given under heaven, by which we must be saved*. 4. Hunger, thirst, and pant after his righteousness; receive him upon the gospel terms, as your sanctifier, as well as Saviour; yea let me prevail with you, sinner, to go to him directly, and fall down in his presence: his aspect shall be kind, his countenance a smile, and his face shall be a perpetual sun-shine, if you are but sensible of your former folly, throw it away and take up with him alone:—Stand still sinner, and see the salvation of God—behold grace and mercy like weeping at your feet.—The free, the sovereign, the extensive, the attractive grace of God, comes courting to your soul, and does speak to you in this manner: *hold, hold, you poor ignorant creature, where do you run? turn to me, look unto me, and be ye saved, for I am God, and there is none else*

I am Jesus the Mediator, who can
 pacify your conscience, who have bruised
 the head of the serpent. I have divine
 blood to heal the wounds of your grie-
 vious heart! a divine obedience to fulfill
 the demand of the law in your room! a
 divine Spirit to transform you after God's
 image, to assure you of his love, and all
 health and salvation, to satisfy the desires
 of your immortal soul.—O sinner, is your
 heart a stone, that it does not dissolve at
 his gracious message? can the rock hold
 out against those bowels of compassion?
 O stubborn wretch! cannot these cords
 of love draw your immortal soul?
 And such an astonishing condescension
 prevail with you to throw yourself down
 at his feet, kiss his scepter, and consider
 your folly, in deviating so long from so
 great, so good, so glorious a God, and
 compassionate Saviour? come sinner, be-
 lieve yourself, before it will be too late;
 the present time is the day of Salvation,
 this is the acceptable time: now in the
 time and vigour of your life; in the
 noon of your days, before your race is
 run, before the juice and marrow of
 your bones are exhausted in the de-
 vil's service; remember that God (as it
 were) laughs at that repentance which
 men begin (when they can keep sin and
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the world no longer in possession) when they are thrown on a death-bed, and have a near view of eternity; when they are drooping and languishing, when the mind is employed with thinking of the pain and anguish of the body; when they are settling their estates, and disposing of their worldly affairs; or when their thoughts of sin, and of a future state, are but transitory and superficial; then to repent has been rarely found true, and almost always suspicious and counterfeit: or then to give leave to your ministers to come, or send for them, in order that they may give you an epitome of the doctrine, and your duty, to furnish your mind with thoughts of God, Christ, Heaven, and Eternity; when the Physician has given you over, and you are just ready to be summoned to appear before the great tribunal; your understanding being as weak as your body, which gives me leave to tell you is no less, than a mere mocking of God and his messengers, and a sign religion is to you much like physic, which you don't make use of but in cases of necessity, and when nothing else will do you good; or that you have a pitiful, low esteem for the great God and his service, thinking this to be worth no more than a feeble thought, when you

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can serve the devil and sin no longer.—
 This therefore, O sinner, never will do;
 but now whilst the soul is in its full
 strength, able by the divine grace, to con-
 sider the sinfulness and sad consequence
 of its life, you can have views of spiri-
 tual things, and with an undisturbed
 mind exercise faith in Christ; now whilst
 the faculties of your soul, and the senses of
 your body are capable of using the means,
 and appointed ordinances; or to advise
 with your ministers, about spiritual, and
 eternal things, if their words, by the
 concurrence of the divine Spirit, might
 strike your soul into a change or reno-
 vation of mind—Now, strive, and pray,
 hunger and thirst after Jesus, and his
 righteousness, and the crown will be
 yours; now accept of mercy whilst it
 is to be got; now lay up your trea-
 sure and secure your right to the tree
 of life; now remember your creator,
 and serve, love and fear that great
 and glorious Being: now live nigh to
 him, walk by faith, and under the gui-
 dance of the divine Spirit, till your eye
 strings shall begin to break; and your
 imprisoned soul, let loose, by the friendly
 hand of death, wing its way to the heaven-
 ly Jerusalem, and being advanced to ange-
 lic excellence, with the large immortal

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assembly, shall serve the Lord forever.—
 Which God, of his infinite mercy, grant
 to all those, who have served him accept-
 ably, with reverence and godly fear,
 thro' Jesus Christ, AMEN.

DISCOURSE II.

Of the CHRISTIANS well grounded Comfort, and Joy in the LORD.

PSALM II. II. l. cl.

“ And Rejoice with TREMBLING.”

AMONG the various prejudices the devil hath instilled into the minds of many, against the true spiritual religion, and thereby withholds them from its serious and earnest practice, to support his own kingdom; these are not the least, *a fear of being melancholy, and that it is very pernicious for their health, nay studying things of this nature, thereby forever would be deprived of that cheerful temper, kind nature hath bestowed upon them, if not made distracted: but upon due consideration, this hellish suggestion ought to be esteem'd no other, but a mere calumny; for how can religion be a melancholy service? it is a work of rejoicing for joy :**—*Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart ;†*—yea none can
rejoice

* Hosea ix. 1. † Ps. xcvi. 11.

rejoice so heartily as those who make God their portion, and set the Lord always before their eyes ; God and all his creatures are their friends, *all things work together for good to them* ; *—in every future prospect, *rejoicing in hope of the glory in God* ; †—nay, joy, that even in *afflictions*, in *temptations*, in *sorrows*, in *reproaches* ; burns with an unquenchable flame ;—how can it promote madness and distraction ? there is no wisdom like that wisdom, which makes men wise to salvation ; and instead of mad, makes wise the simple : Ps. 19.—So that he becomes attentive to God's ways and works, fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, which makes him chuse the good, and refuse the evil.—In what manner can it hurt his constitution ? *length of days is in the right hand of wisdom* ; ‡—and he that *walks after the Spirit*, will not fulfil the *hurtful lusts of the flesh*, § but daily learn to mortify the cravings of corrupt appetite ; he will abhor *drunkenness*, *chambering*, and *wantonness*, which debases men into brutes ; and when he eats, it will be for nourishment, not for indulgence ; and when he drinks, it is to quench his thirst, not to gratify and inflame his appetite ; thus

* Rom. viii. 28. † Rom. v. 2. ‡ Prov. iii. 16. § Gal. v. 16.

thus being temperate in the use of all things upon earth, it will naturally prolong, instead of shortening his days—or will dishonour and poverty flow from thence? No, *in the left hand of wisdom are riches and honour*; * and *blessings are upon the head of the just*, †—or shall it produce trouble and vexation, tormenting men's minds? in no wise; the saints are able from their own experience, to affirm, that the ways of seriousness are truly *ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace*; that they have had more joy from reflecting on God, and his beautiful perfections, on Christ and his preciousness, and from contemplating of heaven's glory, in one hour, than ever they received from the enjoyment of the vain wicked and transitory things of this world.—Away then with such a calumny, that religion would make men melancholy, and let the true spiritual service of God be held; for that only, can make our life a perpetual jubilee, while the *kingdom of God verily is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy ghost*. ‡

A thing which the Apostles, and the Evangelists, Christ's Ministers, were fully convinced of, and therefore not only admonished the kings of Judea, and rulers

* Prov. iii. 16.

† Prov. x. 6.

‡ Rom. xix. 17.

rulers of the Jewish nation, who were the chief opposers of Christ and his kingdom, decently to demean themselves towards him, when they said, *be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth*, with an earnest exhortation to their duty, *to serve the Lord with fear*, but also *to rejoice in him with trembling*.—In regard to the first, *the service of God with fear*; we have spoken of it in the foregoing sermon; now I intend to set before you the second admonition of Christ's Ministers, *rejoice in him with trembling*.—O that God would assist, me worthily to speak of such a delightful subject! it is here alone we can truly find joy and comfort; joy which surpasses all the joys of earth and sense, all the rarities and curiosities of this present life; joy which a serious man rejoices, and triumphs in, more than the greatest monarch of this world, in his boundless Empire; yea all the pomp and splendour, ease and fullness, which the highest degree of worldly wealth can purchase, are not worthy to be compared to it:—O that the Lord would excite your hearts to his *service*, and *fear*, that you may have a substantial foundation of comfort and joy, from having that service actually begun here, on earth, which will be perfect hereafter; while

while others with all their joys and comforts, which flow from the imagination only, will find themselves deluded!—In order to this, and that every one may make their joys reasonable and substantial; I shall endeavour to shew wherein the joy of a religious Christian consists, and in speaking to the words read at present, observe the following particulars,

I. The joyful affection to the LORD, t. w. rejoice [in him.]

II. The manner in which we ought to rejoice, with trembling.

I. Rejoice.—The word in the genuine language denotes not only *joy*, or *gladness* in general, but a very great and extraordinary *joy*, which dilates the heart, makes the lips to shout, the hands to clap, the feet to dance, and whereby soul and body most sensibly are affected and moved, according to what we find, Hof. ix. 1. Job iii. 22. *To rejoice exceedingly, joy like that of the old Israelites, on the day of the anointing of King Solomon, when they blew the trumpet, and piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.**—Thus the meaning of this admonition is, that

* 1 Kings i. 40.

that the kings and judges of the earth instead of delighting and rejoicing in their ways, of exulting in their going a whoring from God, and to dance with joyful songs, for their heir, should *rejoice* in the ways of God and his *service*, nay in the *Lord himself*, to delight in contemplating all the glorious perfections of the divine Nature, in reflecting on God's providences, in examining the reasons and end, in his love to mankind, in resting in the bosom of the gracious Redeemer and Saviour Jesus, in submitting themselves to his government, in observing his precepts, and in walking by faith, and *rejoicing* in him *without confidence in the flesh*.—But to give you a particular view of this joyful exercise, in such a manner as it is relating to a real Christian, living under the dispensation of the gospel: In order you may be more and more in love with its picture, drawn by the pencil of the divine Spirit, in the holy Scripture, and through the grace of God, endeavour to get it imprinted on your soul, we say that this *rejoicing in the Lord*, implies,

A sensible delight in God, so as he has been pleased to discover himself with all his perfections, by his works and in his word.—The sinner, by divine illumination

mination, having received a sanctified
 knowledge of the glorious God, seeth
 him in all his perfections, and excellen-
 cies to be every way amiable, O! in
 what joy, in what gladness, in what ex-
 ultation of Spirit must he be! when the
 sight of God's countenance is shining
 upon him, how sweet are then his medi-
 tations upon, and the thoughts of God, pre-
 cious to his soul? They, and they only,
 that have experienced it, can give evi-
 dence, and but faintly tell you what
 pleasure flows from the service they are
 engaged in, and how they are pleased,
 when favoured with sensible communion
 with God,—“ by this the world vanishes
 out of sight, and death itself loses its ter-
 rors; by this the Martyrs have been enabl-
 ed to sing in the flames, and most joyfully
 to triumph over all that is most frightful
 and distressing to nature.”——But while
 there are a great many, very often elated
 with rapturous joys, which proceed from
 nothing but a mere self-love, and an ir-
 regular, over-heated imagination; and
 which perhaps have raised greater prejudi-
 ces in the minds of men, against the true
 and spiritual Service of God, than any other
 thing—it is necessary, in order to set the
 spiritual joy and comfort of God's children
 in a proper light, that I should speak more
 S distinctly

distinctly of it, in regard to it's object.—

The first thing then to be considered is,

1. God's impartial *justice*, "whereby he is unchangeably inclined to render to every one according to his deserts," and is determined not to spare impenitent sinners, at the day of Judgment, but doom them forever; which appears horrible and cruel to a graceless heart, but just and fit to the illuminated soul, which knows that God must do as he does, because sin is an infinite evil, and according to strict justice, worthy of an infinite punishment; and therefore his conduct appears infinitely glorious in its eyes; loving and praising, nay *rejoicing* in God's real and true character, as the Angels do in heaven, when they celebrate the praises of the holy God: *—
Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth. †—
 Further the sanctified soul can *rejoice* in God's *justice*, which has been satisfied through his own Son, Jesus, and there-
 fore

* Ps. xcvi. 11, 12, 13. † Rev. xix. 1, 6.

fore believing in him, and receiving Christ's righteousness by faith, is acquitted from guilt, and freed from condemnation. Rom. viii. 1.—And by proper evidences and rational grounds is persuaded of its being in favour with God, and intitled to eternal salvation; so that he with a dilated heart, can say, to the Lord, *O God my righteousness!*—Does a trial befall him? he knows it comes from the hand of God, as a reconciled father, for his profit, and purging; and not from his hand, as a sin revenging judge for his punishment—therefore under every changing dispensation he may sing of mercy and judgment, and what is a terror to others, is a song of praise and matter of rejoicing to him—I will
 —praise thee O Lord, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.

II. God's holiness, or that divine disposition in God, whereby he loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, which he shews in his whole government, and has been most perfectly manifested in the death of his Son, appears infinitely beautiful and glorious, excellent and amiable, in the eyes of the divinely enlightened soul, and breaks out not only into praises and cele-

* Isaiah xii. 1.

celebrations of his maker; *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory!** or, *who is like unto thee O Lord among the Gods? who is like unto the glorious in holiness?* but he also rejoices and has a delight in it, the more, while he knows that He, *who has begun a good work in him, will perform it to the day of Christ; and cleanse him from the remains of his defilements and impurity, agreeable to his promise:—I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, † &c.*—By which the soul obtains such a joyful satisfaction, that it causes it to say, *art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine holy one! ‡*

III. God's omniscience, the believer can esteem as his friendly and tender eye, which, wherever he may be, is fixed on him; and hence he praises God with David, for his all-seeing providence;—*O Lord! thou hast searched me, and known me, thou knowest my down setting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought, a-far off thou compassedst my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways, &c. §*—And being lost in a joyful astonishment and delight, in the glorious God, it makes him say with David, *what can I say more*

* Isaiah vi. 3. Exod. xv. 11. † Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ‡ Hab. i. 12.
§ Ps. cxxxix. 1, 12.

unto thee, for thou Lord God knowest thy servant? *—Great is our Lord, and of great power, his understanding is infinite! †

IV. God's omnipresence, when the believer calls this to his mind and retains it, when even in the most dreadful situation, he can rejoice in the Lord, and with Paul, and Silas, in the stocks, and at midnight, sing praises unto God. Acts xvi. 25. This sometimes changes his death-bed into a couch of joy, and he overcomes all his fears, crying out with Jacob, *I have seen God, face to face, and my life is preserved*: ‡ *Dr, I fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.* §

V. When God's children attentively observe God's infinite power, displayed in the government of the world, and in an endless variety of instances, in his providential dispensations; it evidently appears that he can do all things, O! how will they believe, admire, adore, and rejoice in so mighty a God, and in regard to themselves, with joy and singing, exalt his almighty Power; saying, *for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them, whose heart is perfect towards him*! ¶ And in all their troubles misfortunes,

* 2 Sam. vii. 20. † Ps. cxlviii. l. 5. ‡ Gen. xxxii. 30. § Ps. xxiii. 4.
¶ 1 Chron. xxi. 9.

tunes, adversities, and whatever may befall them in this valley of tears; with all tranquillity and composure of mind set down, and with the greatest alacrity and pleasure trust in God cheerfully, committing the event of all to him, and say, *the Lord will perfect that which concerneth us.* *

VI. God's loving kindness, unbounded goodness, grace, mercy, and long suffering, will ravish the heart of a true Christian; and amazed at the dealings of an infinitely great and glorious God, with such mean and unworthy creatures, he cries out;—*who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold things that are in heaven, and in the earth?* † and with exultation, lifting up his soul unto God, he breathes forth the language of David; *I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify thy name forever more, for great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell, &c. Thou, O Lord! art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.* ‡—And can any thing more powerfully ravish his heart, and excite him to spiritual joy, than to consider, that so infinitely great and glorious a God,

* Ps. cxxxviii. 9. † Ps. cxiii. 5. ‡ Ps. lxxxvi. 12, 13.

God, who could immediately have condemned all mankind forever, will yet shew kindness to unthankful, guilty, hell-deserving rebels; yea even in his Son, his only begotten Son, will become *the God of Salvation*, for every humble believing sinner: Pf. lxviii. 19. And that in a manner, which is as laudable for God, as amiable for the sinner: when such an one reflects upon so truly glorious a plan of redemption, it cannot be otherwise, but he must needs be affected and peculiarly content in his mind, *rejoicing in* God's astonishing condescension: much more, when by his free grace he sees, that he, even he in particular, has some rational and proper evidences, to be persuaded of his sincerity, so consequently of his interest in Christ, and title to the eternal inheritance; and thus can say, *Lord! thou art my refuge and my portion, in the land of the living:** How must this transport his heart, with rapturous thoughts, and fill his mouth with the joyful praises of God, to say with the virgin Mary, *my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit rejoiceth in God my Salvation:†* Nay; the amiable and beautiful perfections of God, manifested in his dear Son, and revealed to his soul, he

* Pf. cxlii. 5. † Luke i. 46, 47.

he is so elated with, that he cannot conceal them, but is forced to *shew* unto others, *the praises of the Lord and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done*; moreover, when he remembers that he, above thousands and millions, has an interest in the covenant of grace, and imparts the joyful communion of the unchangeable and everlasting God, who has promised, *that the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed.**—That the eternal God is his Father and friend, compassionately to provide for him here, and to make him eternally happy in the enjoyment of himself.—This bids him to break out into celebration of the infinitely good and glorious God, for so great a favour bestowed upon him; *thou Lord art most high forevermore,*†—and he is no less taken up with a delightful admiration of the glorious and ever blessed God, in treating such an unworthy hell-deserving sinner, in so kind and friendly a manner, O! how infinitely endearing is this faith the ravishing soul!—But,

VII. Shall I lead the religious Christian a little further to his God, the more he contemplates his glorious perfections

‡ Ps. lxxviii. 4.

* Isaiah lii. 10

† Ps. xcii. 8.

the more he will *rejoice in him*; for with a divinely enlightened eye, beholding the works of creation and preservation, he views, and is sensible of the greatness, wisdom, goodness, and glory of his maker; and filled with high and exalted thoughts of God, his heart is excited to his praise.—*The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them, that have pleasure therein; his work is honourable.*†—Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches:‡—and no wonder—if we take a view of the glorious firmament, enlightened by so many glittering spangles, the stars appear to us as a brilliant canopy, and with their refulgent splendour dazzle our eyes, and convey to the mind grand ideas of the all-powerful Creator.—The sun, runs his course by day, and the moon, makes her circuit round the world, by night! is not this a matter for all the inhabitants thereof to glorify their maker, and especially for God's children to *rejoice in him*, that made it? This is most certain, and I dare call upon the conscience of every serious Christian, who attempts to acquaint himself with God,—even the rain, hail, snow, and stormy wind, fulfilling his word, make him delightful—

T light-

† Ps. cxi. 2, 3. ‡ Ps. civ. 24.

lightfully to reflect on the wisdom, power,
 and goodness of God, and joyfully to ex-
 claim, *Praise ye the Lord from the Heavens,
 praise him in the heights !**—Or, if we cast
 our eyes round about us, does not the at-
 tentive Christian find himself surrounded
 with all such things as may be necessary,
 either for his convenience, or reasonable
 pleasures? The earth is finely furnished
 with the most beautiful ornaments, and
 provisions; nay upon its surface, is spread a
 curious carpet, embroidered with all man-
 ner of flowers, plants, and trees: when he
 beholds and meditates upon it, especially
 views them through microscopes, what
 curious fabricks does he espy? what lively
 strokes of our great master's hand, does
 he see in it, and how is he touched at
 heart, with a sense of his glory, nay
 wondering, adoring, and rejoicing in
 him, breaks forth into praise of the im-
 mense wisdom, goodness, and power of
 his maker? *Great is our Lord and of great
 power, his understanding is infinite: ‡—Bless
 the Lord O my soul, O Lord my God! Thou art
 very great, thou art clothed with honour and
 majesty. †—*Or should I enter into a large
 demonstration of the reasons, a Christian
 has to rejoice in the ways of God's pro-
 vidence

* Ps. clviii. 1.

† Ps. cxlvii. 5.

‡ Ps. civ.

vidence, in governing the world; wherein the nature of all his moral perfections is eminently displayed and discerned; and what joy, what delight, and particular pleasure he can take in the ordinances of God, and all the appointed means of a near approach into his special presence, so that his soul therewith is *satisfied as with marrow and fatness*,*—My Discourse would be too long, and perhaps too tedious for the reader: therefore contenting myself, with that I have said of the exceeding joy and satisfying delight in contemplating upon *Jehovah*, and his amiable perfections, shining in all his works.—I proceed,

II. As to the *manner* in which that *rejoicing in the Lord* is required of Christ's Ministers and to be exercised by us;—it is with *trembling*:—This at the first view, certainly appears somewhat strange, how that *joy*, and the uncommon gladness, just now spoken of, can be accompanied with *trembling*: But since I have already demonstrated, in the first clause of my text, how the *fear* wherewith God would be *served*, was not to be taken for the servile and offending *fear* of a slave, but for the dutiful and ingenuous *fear* of a child, otherwise called a holy awe, and high esteem

* Pf. lxi. 5.

esteem for God; we can easily apprehend, that this *trembling*, having its relation to the same Lord, whom the Kings of Judea and the rulers of the Jewish nation must *serve* with a filial fear, is not to be understood as an exercise of the mind, by which the sinner is afraid and trembles at God's wrath; no, but as that humble disposition becoming true servants of God; who being convinced of the infinite dignity, greatness, glory, and beauty of the most High, feel so much veneration and esteem for him, that it grieves them, not only of having so often broken his laws, but they are also afraid of transgressing against them for the future, tho' their sins never were to be punished;—a disposition of the mind, which is opposite to pride, arrogance, and carelessness; and which Christ's Ministers, *to wit*, the Apostles and Evangelists, were aiming at, when they said to their king's enemies, viz. the Jews, and Gentiles; *serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling*, thereby to make them humble; even as Paul exhorted the Romans, * *Be not high minded, but fear* i. e. be humble and take care of not offending the great glorious God, *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; but endeavour by his grace, to obey and please him

* Rom. xi. 20.

all things ; and in the same manner, the Corinthians did *receive Titus*, with *fear and trembling*, * that is, with a becoming humility and reverence, due to *Titus*—and he himself had conversed with them, *in weakness and in much trembling*, † viz. in humility, kindness, and zeal for them, as with godly zeal, to preserve them unblameable for Christ.—So that the *joy* here mentioned, by no means is repugnant to *trembling*, because this *trembling* does not proceed from a fearful apprehension of God's wrath, but from supreme love to God, by which his children earnestly endeavour not to offend him in any thing—as we see in the example of Joseph, when he said to his flattering and immodest mistress, *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God* ; ‡ this being a temper of mind usually in scripture described as a *fear of God*, and *keeping his commandments* ; § and with these two words the whole, and so extremely delightful service, with a due reverence for the supreme, holy and glorious Being, practised by a Christian, very often is expressed, and because this *trembling* is a consequence of fear ; *fear and trembling*, by the holy Ghost, with one breath have been
pro-

* 2 Cor. vii. 15.

† 1 Cor. ii. 3.

‡ Gen. xxxix. 9.

§ ps. xv. xxv. xxxiii. and xxxiv.

pronounced;—*fear ye not me saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence?* *

Thus then this *rejoicing* in the Lord *with trembling*, duly considered in its own nature and effect, we shall be fully convinced, comes to a joyful satisfaction and delight in God, in all his glorious perfections ways and works, by which he has sanctified his great and glorious name, and will have it sanctified and glorified by all rational creatures,—together with such a conduct of a Christian, whereby his holy awe and reverence for the most high, and his works are very lively expressed.—A most delightful exercise indeed! a duty, recommending itself!

A P P L I C A T I O N.

Who is he, that knows God, who has had a sense of his beautiful excellencies, and near approach into his presence, that would not be enamoured with it? O that those who have such mistaken notions of this *rejoicing in the Lord*, and consequently of true religion itself, might get a better opinion of it! Come, Sirs, let us consider your fine arguments, the pregnant reasons you make use of, to confute the necessity of so great a duty,—the true service

* Jeremiah v. 22.

service of God, and the pleasure which immediately flows from it :—You think that to become serious and religious, will make you dull and melancholy ; that those who will lead a life of holiness are obliged to part with every present enjoyment, for sorrow, grief, and anguish, which commonly do fill the hearts of such devotionists, that it makes some fall into strange tortures of mind, others bow down their heads like a bulrush, turn their eyes, change their countenance, fold their arms, and the like motions, which you cannot possibly agree with.

—Well Sirs, tho' I must confess that some professors of Godliness are greatly mistaken, in their notions of their outward appearance, and distinguished comportment above others, thinking this to be “ the proper index of a serious mind ” so contrary to the character the scripture gives of true Christians, and whereby they have not a little contributed to discourage their fellowmen, to be sad and serious ; yet your arguments are of no force, for what is Christianity concerned with the dulness, melancholy and tortures of mind, which you speak of ? I have already shewn you the contrary in my exordium ;—and to use the words of a certain Divine, concerning

cerning their cheerfulness, “ they have
 “ much more of both, than those who
 “ wear ever the broad face of mirth,
 “ and profess to withhold their hearts
 “ from no carnal indulgence.—Real
 “ Christians are satisfied from what they
 “ have in possession, even grace, mercy,
 “ and peace from God the Father, and
 “ from the Lord Jesus Christ, and from
 “ the riches they have in reversion, the
 “ gospel is proposed to them under the
 “ image” of a *feast of fat things, of wines,*
of wines well refined upon the lees—Hearken
diligently unto me saith God, and eat ye that,
which is good, and let your soul delight itself
*in fatness.**—“ Such is the excellency of
 “ my doctrines the multitude of rich
 “ promises, the greatness of the present
 “ and future felicity they lead to, and
 “ insure, that no brutish epicure, finds
 “ such matter of rejoicing, when grati-
 “ fying his pampered appetite, at the
 “ table of luxury, as every believer, who
 “ is intitled to, and persuaded of the
 “ reality of God’s promises.”—Moreover,
 when we earnestly and seriously serve the
 infinitely glorious Being here on earth,
 shall this be called *melancholy*? how then
 can heaven ever be a state of perfect joy,
 since it is also a state of *perfect holiness*? And
 because

* Isaiah lv. 2.

because there are some who pretend to such an affected comportment, for which there is no real cause in the nature of Christian Religion; that you therefore should be averse to a serious and pious life. What argument is this, for a man of any sense? Or that he should imagine that those who devote "themselves to Christ, and abandon all the satisfaction of this world, or once become zealous candidates for the felicity of another, must renounce society,—which is as much a mistaken notion as the other; for the doctrine which is *according to godliness*, was never intended to drive men into deserts, but to lead them through the peaceful and pleasant paths of wisdom, into the blissful regions of life eternal.—It was never intended to strike off the wheels of *business*, or cut a-funder the sinews of *industry*; but rather to make men industrious from a principle of *conscience*, not from the instigations of *avarice*, that they may promote their immortal happiness, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance.—It has no design to extirpate our passions, but only to restrain their irregularities; neither would it damp the delights of sense, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and sub-

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“siding into gall,—“a person,” *moderately and without excess* “may be cheerful
 “amongst his friends, yet joyful in God
 “—he may taste the sweets of his earthly
 “estate, and at the same time cherish
 “his hopes of a nobler inheritance in
 “heaven.”*—Away, away, then, I
 say, with your absurd, silly, and most
 childish conception, of thinking religion
 to be a melancholy service; for no persons
 in the world, have greater reason to re-
 joice than those who serve God with a
 sincere heart, and walk uprightly before
 him, having sought the kingdom of God
 here on earth, which they will enjoy
 hereafter in glory; and those that have
 received the Spirit of adoption, are the
 sons of God, like *Isaac*, and thus truly
sons of joy, who having an interest, in
 Christ, union and communion with him
 do entertain an habitual composure and
 delightful calm, which is a *continual feast*
 Prov. xv. 15.—And the more they improve
 in holiness and live in the light of God’s
 countenance, the more their joy and plea-
 sure will increase: Those take their de-
 light

* “Which further can be seen in the second volume of Mr
 Hervey’s Meditations on the Tombs, Page 124. so far
 Christianity is from obstructing any valuable interests, or
 withholding any real pleasure, that it evidently advances
 the one and improves the other.”—

right in such a good, which is no less, than *Jehovah* himself, who alone can satisfy the desires of their soul.

The worldling may allow himself in sin and vanity, take delight in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in gaming of cards, airy songs, dancing, with other sinful diversions.——The miser *rejoice* in getting money, and in the enlargement of his estate.——The ambitious man, in honour and dignities of this world.——The philosopher, in the knowledge of the things, natural and moral.——The astronomer, in counting the stars, and calling them by their names.——The Metaphysician, in speculating things above sense and nature.——The moralist, in a series of duties and useless performances.——The hypocrite, in his pretended revelations, in false raptures, causeless exults, and certain expectations of his own future glory and particular happiness.——But the real Christian and servant of God, has his greatest satisfaction and *joy* in God himself, what his name contains, what relish and taste he has in contemplating on it,—he, and he only can affirm, who has experienced and plainly tell you, that he has found so joyful a satisfaction in God, so he is in all his perfections, and glorious

ous excellencies, in all his ways and works, in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the holy Ghost, that beauty, or wine, or riches, or honour, or all the variety of pleasure the whole world can furnish, are not able to give that relish and enjoyment, or satisfy the desires of his soul, and that he is fully convinced that the worldling, never has had, nor ever can have such pleasure and delight in gratifying sense, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind, and proving by experiment, the utmost the world can give him, as he feels in the blessed communion with God, and fellowship with Jesus Christ.—Here with enlargement of soul he breaks forth to the glory of God ;—*Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased* ;*—yea the very mournings of his soul are delightful to him, and is glad, when the Lord makes him sensible of his “ deadness, formality and hypocrisy in his duties, of his carnality, worldly mindedness, and unbelief in his heart ; so much prevalency of his sinful affections, appetites, and passions, and so many pollutions by the sin that easily besets him,” and thus

* Ps. iv. 7.

thus deeply may humble himself before God, bewail his back-sliding. and wrestle with him for renewed pardon, and fresh supplies from the fountain of grace and strength, and can declare, that the entertainment in the tears which he sheds for the absence of his dear Jesus, and withdrawings of his Spirit, he would not exchange for all the pleasures and delicacies the world can produce, *he saith of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth what doth it?**—Let us therefore believe those, who have *tasted that the Lord is gracious:†*—And are able from their own experience to assure, that the ways of wisdom are truly *ways of pleasantness and that all her paths are peace,* and not listen to the worldly minded, who call the true spiritual and delightful service of God but folly and madness, but whom misery follows as their shadow.—O ! hear this, ye wise men, who rejoice in your worldly wisdom, of ease and pleasures, neglecting the most important concerns, and spending your time in admiring bubbles ;—ye ambitious men, who “ like to be distinguished “ in the world, treated with respect,” (if “ not adored) spoken of with admiration, “ caressed by superiors, and imitated, and “ admired

* Excl. xi. 2.

† 1 Pet. i 3:

“ admired by equals for a pattern ;”—ye rich men, who take comfort only in your money and the abundance of the things you possess, trusting in uncertain riches, more than in the living God ;—ye wanton men, who attend plays, sporting, dancing and other sinful diversions of the like kind, in which your soul delights, and is captivated as with bewitching vanities, thereby so greatly disregarding God’s glory, and bringing a dishonour upon Christianity.—Here I cannot pass by without observing, how awful it is, not only to see the attendance of *dancing* assemblies, to be so much practised among us, but even the sending of children to such schools, appointed to that purpose, in order they may be finely instructed in it, and the devil by all means be served fashionably, and with the greatest turn and gaiety.—O sad and deplorable conduct, even of those that call themselves Christians ! I shall not enlarge upon it, but only write what I find recorded of the Gentiles, concerning the *practice of dancing*, they said, *that it corrupts good manners, nourisheth iniquity, promotes impure thoughts ; it is a mortal poison, a pest for the youth, a bellows of immodesty, an instrument of wantonness, a deceitful pleasure, a preparation for luxury, an insligation to unlawful actions,*

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an open door to impudence, and an enemy of chastity:—Now, if this be the opinion of the Heathens, how scandalous is it then to see professors of religion, those who will be esteemed Christians indeed, who perhaps appear at the table of our Lord, to practise such an injurious, and Soul-ruinous diversion, nay even excite their children to it? Must not those Gentiles hereafter, in that awful day of judgment rise against them? And is this to answer the exhortation of Paul;—*whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things?*†—besides it is very remarkable, that Paul, admonishing the Christians, *to walk honestly in the day, not in rioting, &c.* § uses there the same word in the Greek, with which the Gentiles called their idols; denoting all kinds of voluptuous, lascivious, and unchaste assemblies, where nothing but dancing, springing, wanton songs, filthy jests, and blasphemous speeches generally take place; and whereby evidently appears, that *dancing* belongs to the *lust of the flesh*, † with *all the unfruitful works of darkness*.*—And
what

Phillip. iv. 8. § Rom. xiii. 13. † 1 John ii. 16. * Eph. v. 11.

whatever excuses some might plead for this sinful diversion, I shall cut them all off, with asking them only, if they would be willing to die in the midst of *dancing*, and appear before the tribunal of God, to receive a sentence of everlasting life, or everlasting condemnation? Oh consider, ye giddy Gentlemen and Ladies, how you will answer to an infinitely holy God, your spending so much time; first, in tip-top dressing, and further, in such an empty pleasure! “ View the last assembly that will be gathered! See thousands of thousands, at the right hand of Jesus, and numberless throng at his left hand! See all earthly scenes closing forever, and the state of each person fixed! oh, if your minds were once suitably impressed with a sense of these important things, you would soon see the impropriety, and danger of *dancing*, and other sinful diversions; and your minds would be taken up with viewing subjects of infinitely greater importance, to rejoice in, than in these low, empty, and perishing things. Oh! my dear young friends, for the glory of God, and the concern of your immortal souls, I beseech you to guard against these, and such like intoxicating pleasures!—And ye parents, who send your children to the *dancing* school, and

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ain permit them to frequent the assem-
 ly of so sinful a diversion; consider that
 the souls of your children are committed
 to your care, and (instead of acting so
 cruel a part by them, to help them by
 the tolerance of that sinful amusement,
 to ruin) endeavour to prevent it, in using
 your authority, warning them of the
 danger, and do all you can to promote
 their salvation; then you will have *the*
answer of a good conscience towards God.—
 But if you are determined against con-
 dition, then you may tremble and shud-
 der upon the view of eternity.—And all
 ye who hanker after nothing but earthly
 vanities and carnal delights, ye take
 pleasure in things which are but slight
 and superficial, and do perish in the very
 enjoyment,—all your mirth at the best,
 is but a *morning cloud*, and as *the early dew*,
 which soon *passes away*, you despise the
 fountain of living waters, and hunt after
 broken cisterns which can hold no wa-
 ter.—What will be the end of this your
 folly and pursuit of all your carnal de-
 lights, mirth, and raillery, and to sing care-
 away, when your sins call for sorrow and
 lamentation? Your laughter shall be
 turned to *mourning*, and your joy to *heavi-*
ness.*—God will at last open the flood-
 gates

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gates

* Luke vi. 254

gates of his anger and your portion will be in outer darkness ! O wretched happiness, the world yields, that hath the curse of God resting upon it forever ! O that the Lord would use me as an instrument in his hand to your awakening ; come sinner, come, poor unhappy wretched and deluded man ! Stand still for a moment and give a due attention to what I shall lay before you, and thereby you may be led to a serious inquiry into your own heart, and be able to judge of your case.—I have given you a description of the religious Christian *rejoicing* in God's glorious perfections, being such *joy* which alone is agreeable to the state of an immortal soul ; *joy* arising from the sense of the divine Majesty, and supreme love to him, and from his loving kindness bestowed upon guilty hell-deserving rebels, on whom he will have mercy in his own Son ; and *joy*, “ which immediately flows from the service we are engaged in ; bursts forth in streams of peace and pleasure, and continues increasing to eternity, as a *well of water springing up unto everlasting life*.”—Well then, to assist you in judging of your state, give me leave to ask you, or rather to intreat you, to ask yourselves, what views you have had, and still have of God's beauti-

ful

ful perfections ? Does not God's justice and holiness appear dreadful to you ? Can it be otherwise, but the thoughts thereof must needs produce self-condemnation, and heart rending anguish, crying out with fear and trembling—*Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire ? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ?* * When you think on God's omniscience and omnipresence, are you not afraid, and must not fearfulness surprise you ? while all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do ; †—with a God from whose presence we cannot fly,—who has said, *I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off,—can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him ?* &c. †—And if you calmly meditate on God's infinite power, whose hand none can stay, or say unto him *what dost thou ?* § Does it not make you cry, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ?* A God who being holy and righteous, is as *everlasting burnings* to the sinner ;—nay, God's goodness, long suffering, grace, and mercy—which perfections from contemplating on them, are so exceedingly pleasing to God's people ; will they not be a terror unto you, when you continue in a sinful life, and thereby have treasured up unto your-

Isa. xxiii. 14. † Heb. iv. 13. † Jerem. xxiii. 23, 24. § Dan. iv. 35

yourselfes wrath against the day of wrath, which will be revealed unto you as a righteous judgment of God, because you have despised the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long suffering.—And,*

How will it be with you, sinner, in the day of trouble, in that awful hour of death? “Will then a party of pleasure,” dancing, gaming of cards, plays, puppet shews, and other sinful diversions, “suit the chamber, of disease? or the songs of folly, any more delight the ear, that listens with restless impatience to the striking hour”? Will then the riches and treasures, in which you have put your confidence, deliver you from the wrath and vengeance of an incensed God? No, sinner, but lamentations of the time, the hour you first attended such pleasing, but destructive amusements be heard, and they who have put in the fine gold their confidence, will find, that it profits nothing in the day of wrath.†—What joy can riches and diversions now bring? will they alleviate the pains of the body, purchase a moment’s respite from death? Or silence the agonizing remonstrances of conscience? Alas! it will aggravate your distresses, if not make you sink into despair, and a golden God is a dumb idol, nei-

* Rom. ii. † Prov. xi. 4.

therable to kill nor to make alive ;—" or will the cruel kindness of friends and physicians," be able to amuse and divert from the racking thoughts the soul, which stands" upon the very brink of eternity ? and with their flattering lips bestow one additional moment ? All their attempts we see are in vain.—Thus, then where worldly goods, as money, health, power, pleasures, honour, dignities, and delicacies, have been the pursuit only ! What a miserable estate must it needs be, to be torn from all these imaginary felicities, and as in a moment to be found stript of the tinsel coverings of folly, standing before the tribunal of that God, *with whom is terrible majesty.* *

Then ye will be disappointed, ye laughing, jolly and railing sinners, who thought, that the great God who changes not, would enrich those with the goods of his kingdom, who have been *rich in this world, but not rich towards God*, and quench hell-fire for men, because they were resolved to run into it; to let those entertain in *his presence fulness of joy*, and be placed at *his right hand, where are pleasures forever more*, who would not rejoice and be glad in God here on earth, nor found
delight

* Job xxxvii.

delight in the paths of real pleasure ;—no, sinners, if you don't accustom yourselves to delight in God, while you abide in this world, you can never be capable of enjoying heaven, which in effect is nothing else but God himself, as the reward of his saints, procuring them endless felicity, from the light of his countenance upon them, and the influence and emanations of his bounty towards them.—Now, suppose you should be in the place of heaven, what satisfaction would it afford, without the enjoyment of God ? As little as Satan had when he presented himself among the Sons of God ; Job ii. 1.—He was never the happier for it, but still carried his hell about him, and so impossible it is for you, sinners, that take your greatest delight in the pleasures of this world, to enjoy heaven, without some real complacency in God—nay what heaven ? Be assured that *sudden destruction will come upon you, which you shall not escape*, but be sent to the place, where that rich man went, who *lift up his eyes in torment*.—O ! poor wretches, be wise and understand your end, yea let conscience do his office, and convince you of the abominable ingratitude to your Creator and Benefactor, the most holy and glorious God, and of impious
madness,

madness, of acting against your own selves, “ for the unsatisfying gratifications of sense; to reject the real joy which Jesus, that neglected Saviour, now offers to give you at this hour.”——O come, I beseech you, sinners ! be no more so bold as to defy the terrors of the Lord, into whose hands you may at least possibly fall,—do no more pervert and burlesque the scripture, nor ridicule that awful sentence of the eternal judge, or play the fool with the most serious discourses of God’s faithful servants and messengers, even as ungodly Israel.—*And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets**—which ye gain no more by, than a clear demonstration of your ignorance, profaneness and malice ; *besides the wrath of God which will arise against you till there be no remedy* ; from this moment then begin to consider and strive to the utmost, by divine grace really to rejoice in the Lord ; I say *really*, for there is something which is merely the product of a heated imagination or hellish suggestion, and but an appearance of joy ;—there is the joy of an hypocrite, which is but for a moment ; Job xx. 5.—And a temporary joy, which

* 2 Chro. xxxvi. 15, 16.

which a man receives the word of God with, and is willing for a season, to rejoice in ; John iv. 35.—For this therefore, that none may deceive themselves, especially those who pretend to meet with some flashes of light and joy, which they have not been acquainted with before ; and upon this presently cry forth, *my beloved is mine, and I am his*, may know, whether those enjoyments are such as proceed from a saving work of the Spirit of grace, or flow from power, craft, and malice, which the devil has to impose upon poor unwary sinners, and delude them into transports of joy, for which they have no solid ground.—I shall endeavour to shew wherein the difference lies, between an imaginary, and seeming, and reasonable, and substantial joy.—The fictitious and imaginary joy, solely proceeds from a false apprehension of men's great attainments in religion, whereby “ they go on in an unhappy round of pride and self-exaltation,” trusting in themselves, *that they are righteous and despise others* ; when some are very well pleased, contented, and rejoicing in the performance of some external duties without considering the frame of their Spirit, and the principle from which it flows, being nothing but empty, dead and lifeless

lifeless things, wherein the Lord's soul can have no pleasure:—Some will be glad, nay transported in an extacy of joy, from imagining themselves true children of God, and great favourites of heaven; entertaining the most undoubting persuasion of their interest in Christ, and ravishing apprehension of future happiness; tho' they never have had a sense of God's glory, never felt the weight of their sins, never wrestled with God in Christ for deliverance from, and victory over their corruptions, or tho' their hearts and affections never sincerely have been engaged in the service of God, and a life of gospel obedience, but in that of the world and their idols.—Some will rejoice in the many benefits and particular favours of God, and not in God himself; even as those who sought Christ, took delight in his presence; John vi. 26.—But, why? It was for the loaves and not for his excellencies, not for the true spiritual bread, to get life for their souls, viz. spiritual and eternal life, the life which consists in union and communion with God here, and in the vision and fruition of him hereafter: Some, in a speculative knowledge of the divine truths, and not in a lively and sensible discovery of them, *to behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory* of

of the Lord, and to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory: *—Or with an enlarged heart in God, to run the ways of his commandments †—this being the greatest delight of God's children;—but the others have delight only in meditating on the divine truths; as in themselves amiable, and excellent, thereby to quiet their conscience; being of those, who received the word of God with joy, as our Saviour describes them; †—or they have delight in studying divine truths, from a selfish principle, and their own interest; when by such an exercise, attaining a tolerable proficiency in knowledge, they get the character of wise men, who understand divinity; whereby they are the more respected, especially by their inferiors, and a lustre is cast upon their office; by Paul called, men who seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. §—And some by an historical faith, without their hearts being purified, who consent to the truths, even as Paul said to King Agrippa, *believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest*. Which indeed is very delightful to the mind, peculiarly when the soul is exercising itself in the many precious promises of the gospel; and without a due reflection

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. † Ps. cxix. 32. ‡ Luke viii. 13. § Philip. ii. 21.

reflection on the state to which those promises are made, rejoices therein, and applies them to itself; as if a man were an heir of the promises, whilst he has neither part, nor lot in the matter, because, *the heart is not right in the sight of God,**—as the Apostle Peter, said to Simon; who in the same manner had believed and rejoiced.—Or some, indeed too many, in the present times, continually go on flattering themselves with a vain presumptuous hope of their regenerate state, on any pretences whatsoever, and are therefore easy, and always full of joy, never complaining of deadness; having no impressions of their sins, no mourning after pardon, or their conscience never charging them with any thing; yea they are bold enough to thank God, they have quiet minds, and nothing troubles them, being always cheerful, blown up with joyful apprehensions of their safe state, and promise themselves peace, tho' they walk in the imagination of their own hearts; whilst the best of God's children always have reason to sigh under the burden of their unavoidable infirmities, and bemoan themselves, crying out, *O wretched man, that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Nay, the very

* Acts viii. 13, 21.

very mournings and groanings under the burden of their wicked hearts, are delightful to them, and "none know the joy of the tears of penitence and humiliation, but those who drop them."—And lastly, some are very well pleased, nay, ravished with the approbation and windy applause of others, and charmed with the opinion they have of their extraordinary goodness. No twins can more resemble each other, than those do the temper of the Pharisees, who *loved the praise of men more than the praise of God* :*—But a true Christian, who sincerely rejoices in the Lord, delights in God, as God; Job xxii. 26,—in Jesus, as Jesus, who is precious to him; 1 Pet. ii. 7.—Even then, when he for the seriousness of his life, and holy conversation, must suffer reproach, and be ridiculed by the ungodly world; his joy very often will then burn with the more flame; and he having God for his portion, feels an habitual composure, and delightful calm in his mind; this clearly appear'd in David, Ps. xliii. 3, 4.—when he complained of an ungodly nation, and their oppressions, with the greatest earnestness; was concerned about *this rejoicing in the Lord*, pray-
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* John xii. 43.

ing to be restored to the temple, in order that he might serve God joyfully, yea esteeming *God* as his exceeding joy.—Thus, then, you see an apparent difference between a false imaginary, and a reasonable and substantial *joy*; to which I must add, that this twofold and distinguishing joy, has different effects too.—The one fills the heart of men with pride, when they say, *stand by thyself, come not nigh me, for I am holier than thou.*—The other wrought by the blessed Spirit, humbles the soul, causes it with reverence to adore the infinite riches of God's free grace, to such a vile creature, as we see in Paul, *when he was caught up to the third heaven.**—The one makes men easy and secure, unconcerned about the power of Godliness, the other finds delight in the service of God, and sensible communion with him.—Those that are elated with rapturous joys, and exults, tho' they are but false and airy imaginations, yet can fully acquiesce therein;—without any delight in the practice of real religion, “ they may take some pleasure in religious exercises; this pleasure is short and transient, like the principle from whence it flows; they soon turn to carelessness and forgetfulness of God, and have

* 2 Cor. xii. 1, 10.

have their affections quickly engaged in worldly and sensual pursuits."—There the joyful evidences of the divine favour, excite the souls of God's children, to an earnest and ready desire after the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit, to qualify them for the performance of good works, "with affection and pleasure, according to the will of God," as the Christian instructor speaks in the 90th question of the Heidelbergh Catechism.

Behold, Sirs, the difference between the imaginary presumptuous joys of an Hypocrite, and the real solid joys of a religious Christian; I hope it may not be to you as a matter of speculation only, but of practice and delightful service, and joy in the Lord, and that with *trembling* for God's infinite dignity and glory, whereby he is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him;*—with *trembling* for God's infinite purity and holiness, not to delight in sin, which is so contrary to his holy nature.—With *trembling* for his sacred word, carefully to avoid every thing which the Lord forbids, and to practise those things which he requires.—And with *trembling*, that drives the soul with all its wants and needs to Christ, to re-

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* Ps. lxxxix. 7.

ceive by unfeigned faith; grace for grace, out of his unmeasurable fulness; to pardon all your sins, to heal all your diseases, to subdue every powerful lust, reconcile you to God, restore you to his image, and make you most blessed and happy forever.—And why, Sirs, would you not endeavour to perform this? It is not only a duty, highly commanded, but an exercise too, which the sensible Christian, who has tasted but a drop of grace, will eagerly long for, whilst nothing can be more delightful to a soul that knows any thing of the glorious perfections of God, of the beautiful excellencies and precious benefits that are in Christ, than to meditate on them.—The infinite greatness and glory of God in general, ravishes the heart; this was the frame of David,—*I will rejoice, and be glad in thee,**—not in empty pageantry, not in the riches and grandeur of the world, not in curious tastes, not in precious odours, not in melody of airy songs, nor in the pleasure of the most sensual epicure, but *in thee*, the Lord of glory, to whom all possible homage and worship, by all creatures in heaven, and earth, are to be paid—in whom is more glory and excellency, than
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* Ps. ix. 2.

in all worlds, in all angels, in all delights, or whatsoever can be called lovely and to be with thee, to behold thy glory is the very heaven of happiness, for my soul.—Or if the religious Christian considers how infinitely diffusive of goodness and happiness the Lord is, to mean unworthy, and hell-deserving sinners, yet he, in particular has had experience of it with what surprising delight, with what secret rapture, will he admire, adore, and praise that great God, and the riches of his sovereign grace, by which he, a vile worthless worm, is *interested* in Christ Jesus, and *united* to him; by faith and love, *pardoned* and *reconciled* to God, become his dear *child*, has his Spirit *dwelling* in him, enjoys *liberty of access* unto him at all times, is the special care of God's *kind and tender providence*, has his faithful promises of all *needful good*, in this life nay, may humbly apply them to himself by faith and prayer, and be assured, he is the heir of everlasting *life and glory*, in the world to come? *All things according to God's word.**—And must be considered as the blessed and everlasting foundations of joy and triumph, to him that believeth.—O! Who would not strive for it, and

* Rom. v. John i. Gal. iii. Heb. x. 1 Pet. iii. Matt. vi. and John iii. Rom. viii.

that to the utmost, to bathe in these rivers of salvation? Or are the consolations of God too small with thee? If not, well then, let these heavenly blessings no longer be neglected, and despised by you, which are more worth, than all the treasures of earth, and able to solace your soul, with more pure and substantial joys, than the vain amusements of time and sense, the sinful world is enamoured with; but fly immediately to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great and only Saviour, believe in him, and let the triune God be the complete object of your desire and hope, your love and joy; in whom you will find, immeasurable fulness of both grace and goodness, to satisfy and save you.—So will you live in the comfortable sense of the beauty of the great, amiable, glorious, and gracious God, in the happy possession of all spiritual blessings, and the joyful hopes of everlasting life and glory.

But before I conclude, I must address those, who have clear evidences in the manner mentioned above, and thus a substantial foundation of comfort and joy, from having begun heaven here in their souls; whose hearts are in some measure conformed to the divine nature and will, having by the blessed Spirit, through

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the dear Redeemer, the law written on the tables of their hearts, and whose whole man is engaged in a life of gospel obedience ; this being the very essence of the true and delightful service of God : But who seem to have great difficulties, and notwithstanding the tenor of their lives does fully evidence, that their faith is sincere, and that it produces all the effects which the scriptures ascribe to it ; yet they are not satisfied with it, but some will say they walk in darkness, without any light of joy and comfort, shining in the tabernacle of their hearts:—But O! Poor distressed souls, come and examine with me your state and condition, ask your own conscience, are there not rays enough diffused from the great Father of light and love, and enkindled in your bosom ? I mean the light of sanctified knowledge, or spiritual wisdom, distinguished from nature and grace.—The light of conviction, to discover your sins and miseries, the infinite evil and danger of which you never saw nor felt before.—The light of regeneration, or renewing of the soul, connected with a holy life and near approach into God's special presence.—The light of faith, by which you could see Christ Jesus, as a complete Redeemer, to seek by

his mediation and sacrifice only, justification before God.—The light of conversion, and sanctification, which causes you to hate all works of darkness, and leads you in the way of God's commandments.—I say more, the light of such secret grace, and influence of the divine Spirit, the least glimmering whereof, however faintly shining into the soul, ye would not change for all the splendour, and brightness of this world.—Do these happy effects of a renewed nature, and religious experiences appear in your hearts and lives? Then ye may humbly claim the blessed promises of God's word, and ye have sufficient reason to be glad in the Lord, and to glory in the God of your salvation.—This ye dare not deny, but still ye make doubt, and question your gracious sincerity, so consequently your interest in Christ, because God in a more special and peculiar manner, has not shed abroad his love in your hearts by his holy Spirit, with superior light and evidence, so that your hearts are enlarged and swallowed up in transports of joy, but commonly with tears and weeping, ye run your ways, as if the Lord stood afar off, and did hide his face.—But pray remember once your state, in which ye were before, and see then, if upon your

your first running after and cleaving
 unto Jesus by faith ; the Lord did not
 shine forth upon you, with the mildest
 beams of mercy and joy, which expelled
 the darkness of your sorrow and grief ;
 entertaining *joy*, not from the vain amuse-
 ments of this world, but from the won-
 derful provision which the infinite wis-
 dom and mercy of God, has made in
 Christ, for the recovery and happiness of
 poor miserable sinners ;—*joy*, from the
 riches of goodness and saving benefits
 bestowed upon you in particular ;—*joy*,
 from that spiritual view of the divine
 perfections, and discovery of redeeming
 love, which you never before had ;—*ay*, *joy*,
 under all the mournings and groanings
 of your souls, over your sins and infirmi-
 ties, when ye were humbly lying at God's
 feet ;—if this be true, let then your heart
 be comforted with former experiences,
 and wait for the same God, who in your
 first darkness, hath shewed you light, and
 according to his immutable love, after
 your trial, quickly will meet you with
 his favour, and with surprising gleams of
 light and joy, break into your souls, com-
 passing you about with songs of delive-
 rance, when all your clouds will be dis-
 persed, all mists and darkness vanish, and
 sorrow and sighing flee away ; be then

encou-

encouraged by God's promises, and say
 with the church, to your mourning souls,
*Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why
 art thou disquieted within me, hope thou in God,
 for I shall yet praise him, who is the health
 of my countenance and my God?** Or can't ye
 recollect that ever since your first convic-
 tion and by the direct act of faith and
 recumbency upon Christ, ye were fa-
 voured with such spiritual sweetness and
 delight? Then turn back to the infallible
 proofs and evidences of real grace, which
 I must now I laid before you, and see whe-
 ther ye have not verily experienced them:
 if not, then ye have not the least reason
 for joy; but if ye have, as I suppose, re-
 member then, that God hath sown the
 first seed of grace and joy in your hearts,
 and that he who is faithful in his pro-
 mises, before ye are aware, shall make it
 bring forth fruit in its due season, for he
 will finish the work which he has begun
 in you, while his *mercy endureth forever,*
 and he *forsakes not the works of his own
 hands; †*—yea, he will be at last the God
of your exceeding joy. ‡—But I imagine there
 are others who through rich grace, have
 been favoured with divine consolations,
 and joyfully felt *the Spirit of God witnessing
 with*

* Ps. xliii. 6, 12.

† cxxxviii. 8.

‡ Ps. xliii. 4.

with their Spirits, that they were the children of God; but now complain, they have for a great while walked in darkness, so that they cannot see him, whom their soul loveth, as if the Lord utterly had forgotten and hid his face away from them.—Those ought to observe, that tho' the Lord is sometimes pleased in a more peculiar manner, to favour his dearest children, with a clear manifestation of his love in Christ Jesus, by the teachings and witnessings of the Spirit, accompanied with such joy as others cannot have any idea of, who have not experienced it; yet the Lord very often will withdraw that soul transporting and ravishing light, and for a time hide his face from them, thereby to shew that he, as a sovereign Lord is absolutely free in his dispensation, and by light and darkness will lead his people through the wilderness of this world, into the land of celestial Canaan.—And to be a little more particular upon the reasons why the Lord withdraws the light of his countenance from them, it is,

First, that they may know by experience, the difference between the light of grace here on earth, and the light of glory hereafter; how the one by many clouds of darkness can be overcast, the other never darkened and clouded. Se-

Secondly, to try and take a proof of their faith, hope, and patience, and by want of their former light of joy and comfort, drive them to his infallible promises, to trust to them, and not to such a lively experience of the particular and soul-satisfying graces of the divine Spirit ; but with the deepest humility they should look unto the Lord, and wait for the God of their Salvation, till he comes and exchanges their darkness with joyful light of consolation withal.

Thirdly, to make them, by the withdrawing of the light of his countenance humble, that they should not think of themselves beyond what they ought ; and by flattering themselves, as persons of some peculiar worth, and from such an apprehension, to look with an un-Christian air upon others, but to be convinced of their own vileness, pollution, unworthiness, and inability, joined with a necessary dependence on God, who alone is the *fountain of life* and delight, and in whose *light we shall see light* ; but also without it walk in darkness.—

This I know, the true religious Christian will consent to ; and therefore being in a state of darkness, waits only upon God, and his promises, till he causes his face again to shine upon him, and sheds
abroad

abroad his love in his heart; but the other more assaulted by unbelief, or doubts and fears about his own sincerity, cleaves to his complaints, and continually cries,—this cannot comfort me, for the Lord stands afar off, he has utterly hid his face from me, his light is darkened in the tabernacle of my soul, and there is no gladness in my heart, no song on my lips, neither do my bones rejoice: what then would be my light, what would be my hope?—To be careful and distinct in answering those complaints, I say that under the present dispensation of the gospel, we find a great many, who are fully convinced of the necessity of free and heart-changing grace; or by the power of the word have received so much light, whereby they clearly see, and consent to, without following after the truth; but by their worldly mindedness, sensuality, and vicious lives, extinguish it, may still not sincerely with the cause of their lifeless state may be taken away, and the darkness of their sins and pollutions exchanged with the pure light of holiness, but remain careless, sensual, and secure; and nevertheless, by the inquiry of their ministers, or real Christians, continually complain of their misery and want of spiritual

spiritual light and joy, to those I must say, that they speak the truth, and if they go on to think well of themselves, they shall find themselves deceived, and their fall to be dreadful, for they are without a drop of grace, and thus destitute of all spiritual and substantial joy, and all their complaints are but to complain, or merely to mention their needs and wants, of which they have not a proper conviction, with no other intent, but in their lifeless state to be comforted by others,—to whom I can give no better advice, than to beseech them from this moment to *turn to the Almighty, and they shall be built up; and put iniquity from their tabernacle; then they shall have their delight in the Almighty, and they shall lift up their face unto God; they shall make their prayer unto him, and he shall hear them; they shall pay their vows unto him, and his light shall shine upon their ways.**—But others who are very melancholy for the withdrawings of God's presence and favour, yet desirous and panting as well after holiness and communion with him, as after spiritual enjoyments, delights and comforts, and therefore dare not deny the evidences of experimental religion, already mentioned, but yet are deprived of sensible

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* Job xxiii. 23, 26, 27, 28.

manifestations and joyful entertainments;—Those poor distressed souls I must answer, that tho' they yield no delightful sense of the divine favour, it is evidently clear, their faith is real; and concerning the darkness of their frame, this can arise,

I. From their gross ignorance and neglect of the gospel promises, and not applying them as they ought, being very often prone to distrust God and Christ; no wonder then the faith of such is little and staggering, and by affronting God and Christ in this manner, that the Lord resents and punisheth it by his sending *leanness into their souls**:—Or their obscurity takes its rise,

II. From their unhappy mistake of the nature of faith, by which direct and realizing act only they are applied to the soul of the convinced humble sinner, and not by the reflective act, viz. When the soul casts itself upon Christ, as knowing comfort is there to be had, tho' he is not sure of it for himself, or that he in particular has an interest in Christ already,—or,

III. From doubting their own sincerity when they cannot believe they possess those qualifications and characteristicks

* Ps. cvi. 15.

to which the promises are made, which certainly takes away the ground of a joyful satisfaction.—Or,

IV. From the many difficulties and oppositions they meet with in this world, which sometimes will bring the best of God's children under great agony of spirit, spread a thick cloud over their hopes, and cause many sighings and mournings, as we see it was the dark frame of the righteous Job chap. iii. and 7, &c.

V. Or from severe persecutions of the wicked, who are in great power and prosperity, having no bands in their death, while God's dearest children, commonly are chastened, afflicted, and oppressed, which has been the case, that even Asaph, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, begun to doubt his faith,—*as for me my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt.**—Or,

VI. From the temptations and assaults of Satan, who restlessly, maliciously, and by craft and violence, attempts to obscure the light of faith in God's children! and if it were possible to shut them under final despair of God's mercy, or

VII. From the commission of any particular and secret lust, which has not been discovered by the eye of the world, tho'

* Ps. lxxiii.

tho' not concealed from the all-seeing eyes of God,—or from falling into some darling sins, especially amongst others, into that *curst root of covetousness*, the love of money, to which inordinate desire, even the minds of God's children, are sometimes too much given up, and is a great reason of their unbelief, and want of joy, as the Apostle clearly demonstrates,—*which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows* ;*—so that money and worldly goods being the particular objects of their esteem and affection, with great grief and trouble of heart, they cannot forsake them ;—or when they suffer their ill-grounded desires to proceed so far as to discompose their minds, and devour their ease and self-enjoyment, to raise turbulent thoughts, and anxious resentments in their breast, which is a very sufficient cause of darkness, and it can be expected no other, but that God, (who is thereby greatly offended and injured should frown upon the soul, and leave it to sorrow and anguish, instead of favouring it with sweetness and delight ;—no, no,—*your iniquities have separated between you and your God,*

* 1 Tim. vi. 10.

God, and your sins have hid his face from you, &c.*—Or lastly.

VIII. From spiritual departure of God, whereby the best of God's children in a measure, and sometime for a good while are left to themselves, and causes the soul to walk in the greatest darkness and distress.—Behold these and the like temptations, sins and difficulties, are commonly the occasions of darkening the faith, cooling the zeal, and damping the joy of the believer's, and which very often will make them so anxious, that they break out into these woful complaints, *O Lord why standest thou afar off? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? Why writest thou bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth? Why holdest thou myself as my enemy? Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favourable no more? Where is the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me, are they restrained, are they in anger shut up? Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro, and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? Wilt thou tread under foot a creeping worm? Or is it good unto thee, that thou shouldst oppress? That thou shouldst despise the works of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? O God do not condemn me, shew me wherefore thou contendest with me,*
have

have I sinned? What shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men, why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? Why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? Or shall I go down to the dust, without my soul shall be comforted with thy light? Oh that it were as in months past, as in the days, when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness, as I was in the days of my youth when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;—when the Almighty was yet with me forsake me not O Lord my God, be not far from me, but turn to me, turn to me, shine upon me with the light of thy countenance, and restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

Come ye children of Zion, who mourn over and lament your loss of a delightful sense of God's favour, tho' you give the real specimens and proofs of a Christianity in true and vital piety, or at least that you are not totally destitute of the genuine workings of a principle of grace within you;—I sympathize in your deep distress, I weep with you that weep, have compassion on you, for the heavy load of your afflictions, by which you are pressed, I pity you under your darkness and deprivation of sensible pleasure and joy of faith, and I beseech the Fa-

other of light, that it soon may please
 him to shine upon you with the candle
 of love and consolation: But I say also to
 your encouragement, that *light is sown for*
the righteous, and gladness for the upright in
*heart ;**—that after your fight you shall
 triumph and from darkness be brought
 unto light, and the seed which the Lord so
 graciously has sown in your heart, after
 your trial will spring up, and produce
 such abundant fruits of joys and com-
 forts, that your mouth shall be filled with
 his praise and honour all the day.—That
 you shall be compassed about with songs
 of deliverance, and with the high praises
 of God in your mouth, burst out into a
 cheerful song,—*I will greatly rejoice in the*
Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he
hath clothed me with the garments of salva-
tion, he hath covered me with the robe of righte-
ousness,† the Lord has pleaded my cause,‡ he has
made me glad according to the days wherein he
hath afflicted me, and the years wherein I have
seen evil.§—In the mean time, it is your
 duty, my Christian friends, carefully to
 examine into the occasions of your dark-
 nesses, and thereby the sad loss of spiritual
 enjoyments in God's service, using such
 means by which ye may be brought into
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* Ps. xcvi. 11. † Isaiah lxi. 10. ‡ Micah vii. 9. § Ps. x. 1.

a calm gentle comfortable and joyful frame.---Does your darkneſs proceed from ignorance of the truths of the goſpel and the qualifications and characteriſticks, to which the promiſes are made? Give then a due attention to the ſecret volume by which alone your miſtaken apprehenſions can be rectified, this being the *light unto our feet, and the lamp unto our paths*, ſafely to lead you out of the labyrinth of your perplexed thoughts and reasonings, and above all, earneſtly pray for divine aſſiſtance, that the Spirit of God may open the eyes of your underſtanding, that ye may more diſtinctly *know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints*;*—and that his Spirit may ſhine in your hearts, *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*.†—Or does it proceed from your fears about your own ſincerity, whereby you conclude you have no faith, only becauſe you cannot believe yourſelves to be ſincere, and by which you take away that ſweetneſs, and delightful ſatisfaction which there is in the ſervice of God? Well then examine yourſelves, whether you have thoſe ſigns and marks of a true ſpiritual life, which I have already mentioned,†

* Ephe. i. 18.

† 2 Cor. iv. 6.

† Page 162, 163.

mentioned, and further inquire into your own heart, if you find not an earnest desire of, and endeavour after real holiness, “ love to God himself, to delight in his nature and government, to love to be like him, in the inward man, having the law, being a transcript of God’s moral perfections, written on the tables of your heart, which is the whole and only evidence of vital Christianity, all other marks and characteristicks of a Christian indeed being contained in it,” then you may be assured of your interest in Christ, and have reason to *rejoice in the Lord*.——But,

Do the manifold afflictions the Lord has brought upon you, darken your mind? Cause you to doubt, take away your hope, and make you cry with Zion, *the Lord has forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord*.^{*}—Let it be your first care to acknowledge the hand of God in it, own that he is just in all that he brought upon you, compose yourselves to bear his hand with patience, and do not be discouraged, directly failing in your hopes, but enter into the sanctuary; take a view of God’s providence, and ye will find not only this to be God’s uni-

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^{*} Isaiah lxix. 14, 5. Lam. iii. 18.

versal dealing with his people, thereby
 to try their faith, humble their souls,
 and purify their hearts, but to deliver
 and exalt them also in due time, for this
saieth the Amen, the faithful and true witness
*as many as I love I rebuke and chasten:**—Blessed
is that man, that endureth temptation, for when
he is tried he shall receive the crown of life
which the Lord has promised to them that love
him—who then is among you, that feareth the
Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant
that walketh in darkness, and hath no light
Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and
stay upon his God.†—Yea if ye seriously con-
 sider this infallible promise, as also “the
 need ye have of discipline, how whole-
 some it may prove to your souls, and
 what merciful designs our heavenly Fa-
 ther has in all the corrections he sends
 upon his children,” I would be ready to
 hope ye will not only suppress all passion-
 ate complaints, but that your hearts
 will rejoice and your mouth be filled with
 praise;—or does it proceed from the op-
 pressions of the wicked, by which ye are
 afflicted on every side, and even as the
 thick and dark clouds obscure the light
 of pleasure and joy of faith? At this be
 not cast down and dejected, but call upon

* Rev. iii. 19.

† Jam. i. 12.

the Lord in your distress, and trust in his name, which is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe ;*—the Lord himself has said, that he will preserve the souls of his saints, and deliver them out of the hand of the wicked :†——Though they walk in the midst of trouble he will revive them, he shall stretch forth his hand against the wrath of their enemies, and his right hand shall save them.†—Nay, I dare, with another expert Divine likewise, appeal to the experience of all true servants of God, whether or not, their suffering times have not frequently been their sweetest times, and they enjoyed most of God, when most cast out and despised by men ? This we find was the case of Christ's primitive servants, when threatened by the Jewish Sanhedrim, and commanded to preach no more in the name of Jesus, they rejoiced, that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of Jesus," see this in Paul and Silas, when they sang praises even in the dungeon—and is Jesus the same now as he was then, able to sweeten the greatest sufferings and afflictions with his love ? Put then your confidence on him, and let the remembrance of Christ's situation among blood thirsty enemies, be

* Prov. xviii. 10.

† Ps. xcvi. 10.

† Ps. cxxxviii. 7.

be a means to sweeten yours, yea let it cause you to rejoyce with the *Apostles*, to suffer persecution for his name.—Or do temptations of Satan stumble your faith, shake your hope, discourage your heart, rob you of your comfort, and hinder you of a free and delightful enjoyment of God? think then this to be the ordinary work of the prince of this world, but also, that Christ has bruised his head, and made the power of his arms ineffectual, so that he and all his infernal conspirators are not able to separate God's faithful servants from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord, who *has purchased them with his own blood, and sealed them by his Spirit unto the day of redemption,** by which they can challenge all their enemies and joyfully ask, *who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.†*—In the mean while, it is your great duty to *put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*, continually flying to the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, both against sin and satan, then you may be sure that
Christ

* Ephe. iv. 30.

† Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Christ will be your ready succour, redeem your souls from deceit and violence, and *shortly bruise Satan under thy feet*. *——Or,

When darling sins and favourite lusts, which in one kind or another, in one degree or another, through remaining corruption and neglect of watchfulness, ye sometimes indulge yourselves in, may be the cause of God's withdrawing, and darkness in your frames ; nay, as I fear this to be the fault of a great many, who mourn over the loss of spiritual enjoyments.—Well then, examine yourselves, and see whether there is not *an accursed thing* in the tabernacle of your heart, which has enkindled God's anger against you, and after ye have found it, do not be content with complaining and lamenting over your corruptions and defilements, by which you never can arrive to joy and comfort again, but confess your sins with humble shame and self-abhorrence, and make a fresh application of the atoning blood of the mediator, by a living faith ;—then put away that *accursed thing*, let no *Delilah* be in reserve, no bosom lust be retained, no sweet morsel rolled under the tongue, but push down the Dragons of vanity from

* Rom. xvi. 12.

from the high places, to whom you have burned incense, and break by a manly self-denying their head, arms, and legs, that they never may rise again, to make of your soul and body a temple of worship; then shall the light of God's countenance shine upon your ways, and the bones by grief and sorrow before broken, rejoice. Finally, is the *forsaking* of God the case, by which he makes it so cloudy before your eyes, that all your songs are changed into mournings? Tho' this may seem severe my brethren, do not look upon it as a sign of his wrath, but as intended to try your faith and obedience, withal, to remember, that dreadful day, in which Jesus, God's dear Son, in the greatest agony poured out his soul before him, and said, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* In order that you may be made sensible of the infinite evil of sin, on the one hand, and of God's vindictive justice on the other, and for this very reason seek for the enjoyment of the delightful fruits of Christ's combat and triumph;—be assured that after it shall have answered God's end, he will return with his consolations, and extend his favour to you: *For the Lord will not cast off forever, but tho' he cause grief, yet he will have compassion according to the multitude of*

his

*his mercies.**—In all your distresses be then but waiting for God, with the deepest humility, and submit yourselves to your heavenly father, *he will surely come, nay, wait for the Lord more than they, that wait for the morning, I say more than they, that wait for the morning; he will bring you forth to the light, and you shall behold his righteousness, for the Lord is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.†*

This it was mourning souls, which for your encouragement I had to advise, and once more, before I conclude,—if it be your desire to honour and serve God, by a lively faith, and your concern to maintain daily communion with God, continually longing after his animating and quickening presence; then without any scruple you may humbly and assuredly claim all the blessed promises of God's word, under all your difficulties and distresses rejoice in the Lord, and with enlargement of soul, with cheerfulness and delight walk in your way, *nay sing unto God, sing praises to his name,—for he who has said that he was sent to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for*
mourning,

* Lam. iii. 31, 32. † Micah vii. 7. and 9. Pf. lxxxiv. 21. Pf. cxxx. 5, 8.

mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness, is your God and Saviour, who will not be to you a wilderness and dry place, nor a land of darkness, but a fountain of light and life, who has not commissioned his ambassadors to terrify the humble penitents, that are convinced of, and mourn for sin, but to comfort and speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.—And no wonder my brethren ye are now reconciled to God, by the precious death of his dear Son, and there is now no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit;—who worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, nor their own works but acquiesce in, and are well pleased with God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ—who hate all sin, being willing to part with every lust without exception, and to comply with every duty the Lord makes or shall make known to them—nay, all the good gifts, with all the special blessings the Lord has bestowed upon, and further will grant his children—have a tendency to joy and gladness, whether they reflect on their spiritual wisdom, by which they now being enlightened in their understanding, know

what

*what is the hope of God's calling, and what
 the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the
 saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of
 his power to them that believe;—or on the
 inestimable propitiation of their Saviour,
 by which they are justified, the Lord not
 imputing their trespasses unto them, but
 transferring them unto his own Son, and
 on his precious death, by which he hath
 made reconciliation for iniquity, and
 brought in everlasting righteousness,
 as also the peace of conscience flowing
 from thence;—or on their sanctification, by
 which they first have received spiritual
 life, and further from day to day, are
 renewed after the image of him, who
 created them;—or on their blessed commu-
 nion with God, whereby as being a royal
 priesthood, they have access to the King
 of Kings, the Lord of Lords, to converse with
 him in his sanctuary, to set down at his
 table, to view the body and blood of
 Christ, to remember his matchless love,
 to make use of him and all his benefits,
 for the refreshment and health of their
 souls, and to walk in the light of his
 countenance;—or on their perseverance by
 the power of God through faith unto salvation,
 by which they never can fall away, tho'
 the mountains should depart, and the hills be
 removed, but are sealed by the Spirit unto the*

*day of redemption:**—Because the Lord who is unchangeable has loved them from all eternity, John xv. and they are in the covenant of grace, which never shall be broke, Jere. xxxii. 40.—having a writ of protection, under the great seal of heaven, the Lord Jesus being their ever faithful guardian, and none shall pluck them out of the redeemer's hand.—Or lastly, if they reflect on the *fellowship with Christ*, even then they have the fountain of life and light and consolation within them, which never is exhausted, but as from an everlasting source flow rivers of living waters, true holiness and every spiritual good, *springing up into everlasting life*.——What then can be the consequence of all those enjoyments of God's faithful servants, but to rejoice in the Lord here, as in a reconciled God in Christ, apprehended by faith, as their covenant God, their everlasting portion, and to be assured of entering into the joy of their Lord hereafter, where God hath prepared for those, that love him, such things as pass man's understanding, where they shall be in his blissful presence to *see him as he is, face to face, entertaining fulness of joy at his right hand, and pleasures forevermore?*

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

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* Eph. iv.

DISCOURSE III.

The true and unfeigned Repentance of Job, after the Manifestation of God's awful and glorious Majesty,

J O B XLII. 5, 6.

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes."

THE Prophet Isaiah being brought in a vision of the Lord, into his glory, yea was seized with such a terror, that with fear and trembling, he cryed out, *wo is, me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts;* so that in consequence of his own wants, weakness, and remainder of corruptions, he could not bear the rays of God's holiness, but was amazed, abashed and confounded in himself; as if he had said, O thou most terrible majesty, thou art the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the most holy one; but I am a vile worthless worm, a poor sinful impotent creature, intirely unclean*

* Isaiah vi. 1, 5.

unclean from the womb, not worthy to be called thy servant! How dare I lift up mine eyes unto thy heavenly throne, where even the *Seraphims* are obliged to cover their faces, as not enduring to behold the resplendent brightness of thy glorious Majesty? How dare I with my defiled soul appear before thy holy presence, who art of purer eyes than to behold the sinner, without a complete satisfaction to thy divine justice, and canst not look on iniquity? How dare I put my foul feet upon the threshold of thy temple; there thy whole house is filled with holiness and glory? How can I with my failing tongue deliver thy messages, preach repentance to a sinful people, and decently discharge the ministerial duty? There I am a man of unclean lips myself, such a polluted, unable and unworthy creature, who has nothing wherewith to appear before so holy and glorious a God. Wo is me! without thy divine grace and assistance, I am lost, sure to perish!—and no wonder, reader, that the prophet was so deeply humbled before God, for considering his inward corruptions and remaining sinfulness, he counted himself unworthy to treat of the holy oracles, besides the exceeding brightness of God's glory and majesty, wherewith the Lord

or in a human shape, or in a spiritual manner, sometimes appears to men, will cause all things to vanish out of sight, and the beams of that eternal light so strongly penetrate into the heart, that thereby they are made the more apprehensive of their own meanness, baseness, vileness, nothingness, in regard of God's infinite greatness; and find reason for being deeply humbled, self-condemning, mourning for, and abhorring all the sins, which they have discovered, and to wrestle with God for renewed pardon, and new supplies of strengthening and quickening grace.—Thus it was with *Abraham*, when the Lord was pleased in a more glorious manner to manifest himself to him, when he acknowledges himself to be but *dust and ashes*.^{*}—And *Elias*, being abased in the apprehension of his own infirmity and imperfections in comparison of God's incomparable and incomprehensible perfections; was smitten with such a reverend dread of God's majesty, as had caused him to *wrap his face in his mantle*.[†]—But not to detain your attention, see but *Job*, that eminent example of patience, when the Lord appeared in his glorious majesty, and had spoken to him

^{*} Gen. xviii. 27.

[†] 1 Kings xix. 13.

him out of the whirlwind, of his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, in creating and governing the world, he said, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes*: So that the motive of his repentance, was a clear and sensible view of God's infinite, invisible and glorious majesty, which so mightily shone forth in a series of his divine works, and in the splendour of his adorable perfections, for he said, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes*; or as the words are rendered by some, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, and, or now mine eye seeth thee, &c.*

In explaining these words, we shall reflect

- I. *Upon the first motive of his repentance, when he saith, I have heard of thee the hearing of the ear, but, or, and, or yea, now mine eye seeth thee.*
- II. *Upon the nature of his repentance, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*

I. In order that we may clearly apprehend the motive of man's humiliation and repentance, we ought to attend to that divine and audible voice which is mentioned in the foregoing chapter. II.

II. The effects thereof upon his soul.

1. In the foregoing chapter we read of an answer the Lord gave unto *Job*, out of the whirlwind, to which the inducement was as rare as its contents wonderful, and worth while to consider; for when *Job*, being the greatest man of the earth, *upright, and one that feared God*, was deprived of all his riches, children and servants at once, first patiently bore the affliction, with a resignation to God's will; but afterwards smitten by Satan, with *sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown*, vexed by his own wife, visited by his mourning friends, and no where could find any solace, he finally burst out into heavy and immoderate complaints, and *curst the day in which he was born*;*—and while his friends unmercifully treated and suspected him of iniquity, or at least of hypocrisy, *Job* was carried away by such a passion, that he not only vindicated his sincerity, but expostulated with God too, about his dealings with him, even as if the Lord did afflict him too severely, and without a cause;†—and tho' *Elihu*, who was the wisest and youngest of his friends, more moderately shewed him his mistake, and appealed to God's sovereign dominion, power,

* Chapt. i. ii. iii. † Chapt. iv. xxi.

power, wisdom, and righteousness ; representing to him the conduct and discourse, which would have become him better than that he had used, and which founded in Elihu's ears, as if he accused God's justice and goodness ;—yet Job's heart being cast down by grief and too much wounded by the preceding hard words of his friends, and the more sharp reproof of Elihu, was thereby not healed and but little moved ;—till a voice from heaven struck him,—the Lord twice speaking to him out of a dark cloud, whirlwind, or tempest, by which God's majesty was represented, to convince him of his greatness, and Job's unworthiness, and nothingness ; for the *first* time the Lord begun his speech with a fine preface, *who is this that darkeneth counsel by words, without knowledge,** that disparages my counsels with his ignorant discourses about them, *gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me ;†* by which language Job was summoned before God's holy presence, that if he had courage enough he now should argue the case with him, as he had often desired, and to give reason for his indecent complaints, in which, without a cause, he sought rest and peace, which

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* Chap. xxxii. xxxviii.

† Chap. xxxviii. 2, 3.

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is to be found only in a calm and humble subjection to God's kind providence and wise government.—In order that he might be fully convinced thereof, *first*, the Lord relates to him his unlimited power, by which, without the concurrence of men, he has *founded the earth*, that mighty stately fabrick, upon nothing, and fixed the bounds of the sea, with its boisterous waves, so that they keep within the shores, which cannot be overturned.—*Secondly*, the great Governor mentions his unsearchable wisdom, in *commanding the morning and causing the day spring to know his place*, in bringing forth *the light*, in directing the *treasures of the snow and hail*, of the *wind and rain*, of the *dew and ice*, in ordering the *stars* and *establishing the ordinances of heaven*, and the *dominion thereof on the earth*; * by which *Job* could see, how little he understood of the most obvious things in this world.—*Thirdly*, the Lord speaks of his kind providence and care, about beasts and birds; 1st, About *the lion and the raven*, † upon which, after a short silence, to see what *Job* would reply to this long and sublime discourse; 2d, the Lord proceeded and concluded his speech with a reproof of his immoderate complaints;

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* Chap. xxxvii. 12, 38.

† Verse 39, 41.

and demanded of him to speak, if he had any plea remaining ;* to which *Job*, whose confusion had made him silent, answered with great humility, *behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee*, as if he said, I am a poor wretch, not worthy to speak unto thy Majesty, nor do I know what to answer, therefore *I will lay mine hand upon my mouth,† I will hold my peace* ; —but after all this he seemed not to be humbled enough, and his heart inclined to repentance, his complaints being, as it appears, an accusation of God's providence, and of injustice. For the *second* time then, the divine Majesty spake to *Job* out of the whirlwind, and summoned him again before his holy presence, to argue the case with him, proposing to him his fault after this manner, *wilt thou also disannul my judgment, wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?†* —and convinced him 1st of his folly in taking upon him to contend with God, whilst none could have a power and majesty equal to his ;§ —2d, of his rashness in accusing God's justice and dealings with him, not considering the sovereign dominion, power, righteousness and wisdom of God, for *who hath prevented me, saith the Lord, that I should repay him ? Whatsoever is under the*

* Chap. ix. 3, 4.

† Verse 3, 4.

† Verse 9.

§ Verse 9, 10.

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*the whole heaven is mine,**—and further, in the description of the *leviathan*, to wit, the crocodile, the Lord shewed that his power is infinite, and his dominion supreme, without bounds or limits,—and which fierce and untameable creature he sent *Job* to, that he might learn more humility than to contend with his Majesty, when he saw how unable he was to stand before one of his creatures.—And,

II. Was of such effects too, that *Job* seeing his error more clearly than ever, submitted himself unto the great Lord of all, whose pardon he sorrowfully begs, confessing and repenting of his fault; and by the revelation and appearance of God's dreadful majesty, he was so terrified with a sensible displeasure against himself, for his indecent complaints and vehement expostulations, that he said, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*

i. He had heard something of God, by instruction of the old wise men, who taught their children from their infancy, in the divine truths and promises, and of his eastern friends, but for the most part he received the true knowledge of God
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* Chap. lxi. 11.

and religion in Arabia ; by this he had heard of God's perfections,

1st, That he was *almighty*, which removeth the mountains and they know not—which overturneth them in his anger, which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble—which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea, which maketh *Arc-turus Orion and Pleiades*, and the chambers of the south—which doth great things past finding out, yea and wonders without number.*

2d, That with him was wisdom and strength, that he had counsel and understanding, that he breaketh down and it cannot be built again, that he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.†

3d, That he was benevolent, gracious and kind, for he hath granted him life and favour, and his visitation hath preserved his Spirit,‡ and he knew that his Redeemer lived and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.§

ii. But however brightly this light of knowledge appear'd to him above others, who walked in darkness, by which he was divinely enlightened, and made sensible of God's majesty;—it was not to be compared with the splendour of the divine Majesty, now shining into his soul ;—what he had heard of God and his greatness, nay even

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* Job ix. 5, 10. † Chap. xii. 13, 14. ‡ Chap. x. 12. § Chap. xix. 25.

his foregoing appearance, and voice out of the cloud, did not affect him so much as this, which was accompanied with an uncommon power, as it appears by the most glorious effect it had upon his soul, when he was forced to cry out, *but, or, and, or yea, now mine eye seeth thee.*—

It is certain, that this seeing of *Job*, ought not to be taken in a natural sense, as that he saw God with his eyes; neither in a spiritual, in so far that he could see him with his soul, in the fulness of the divine Being;—for relative to the first, God being a Spirit, cannot be seen by us,—*who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see.**—And in respect to the second, because God is infinite, whose infinite understanding never fully and perfectly can be apprehended:—*No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him;†* and no mortal has ever been favoured with such a sight of God, with which he will be seen in the future glory.—*He, the Jehovah, saith, thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.‡*—The question then is, how this seeing of God ought to be taken? Some of the ancients are of opinion,

* 1 Tim. vi. 16. † John i. 18. ‡ Exod. xxxiii. 20.

opinion, that *Job* had seen the appearance of a visible Majesty, in a glorious cloud, as the *Septuagint* seem to understand it, and thereby Christ's incarnation should have been typified, or that he had seen something like that which *Abraham* beheld on his journey towards *Mesopotamia*, *Moses* in the bush, or *Joshua*, *Gideon*, and others; or some are of opinion, that he saw God in a tempest or dark cloud, even as *Elias* did at *Horeb*, and *Israel*, in the wilderness, as a notable token of his divine presence.—But if we consider the dealings of God with his children, how he carries his work on by degrees; first trying their faith, afterwards more clearly revealing himself to them, so as he is in all his excellencies, so that they believe in him, or by a series of reasoning and reflection on the scripture, not only conclude, that he is their God, but also see, and sensibly taste, that the Lord is gracious, 1 Pet. ii. 3.—And we compare herewith the preceding and following dealings of God with *Job*;—then it appears to me, with other divines, that we here must think on a spiritual fight, wherewith after having heard, that loud and divine voice coming out of the cloud, he saw him with an enlightened eye, with such a clear and strong affection, and

and sensible conviction of his glorious perfections, that he saw, him as if it were before his eyes, and felt his majesty, as with his hands;—by the beams of this divine Sun, all clouds with which his mind was overcast were now dispersed, all mists and darkness vanished, and the Lord himself for the second time, having spoke to him out of the whirlwind, he was irradiated and enlightened with a superior light, distinct apprehension, and lively sense of the truth, which was now of more effect upon his mind than ever; it is true, he was thereby before delivered from sin, he in some measure sensibly knew God, in all his excellencies and glorious perfections, he highly esteemed, and loved him supremely, in being what he is, but such a manifestation of God's glory and beauty, into his soul, he never had so sensibly experienced, as he now did; now he saw him with such an awful apprehension, and consciousness of his majesty, with such an hearty approbation of his eternal power and infinite wisdom, by which the mighty God ruleth over all—and with so clear a view of his goodness, willing to make happy, and of his mercy sparing to consume a sinful rebellious, hell-deserving creature, that he could
not

not but be ravished, and to esteem, admire, wonder and adore, saying, *who is a God like unto thee! thy name alone is excellent, and thy glory is exalted above the heavens.*—Thus having shewn you the motive of Job's humiliation and repentance, I now proceed to consider,

II. The nature of it, which will appear by the words following, *Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*—Wherein two particulars are to be observed,

i. His *repentance*.

ii. The *manner* in which.

1. When Job speaks here of *abhorring himself and repenting*, this must not be taken in an ordinary, but more particular sense ;—a repentance indeed, in the most touching and sensible manner, and which strongly is expressed, 1st, with a *word*, which signifies *to despise*,* *to reject*,† also *to disdain*,† and here particularly *to abhor*,—thereby undoubtedly to shew, the abhorrence or aversion which we have to a person, or something else ; but what it was that Job, being so highly touched, has abhorred, we find not expressed in the genuine language ; thus differently it is taken, either for abhorring his indecent complaints, or his vehement ex-

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* Judg. xix. 38.

† 1 sam. xv. 23.

† Job xxxi.

* Ps.

postulations and eager desires to die, or to be delivered; or his thoughts, his life, or himself;—methinks, that after the receiving of so clear and sensible a knowledge, and conception of God's glorious perfections, his greatness, mightiness, and wisdom, he has abhorred every thing which was against, and inconsistent with it,—so the whole of it comes to an humble self-denial;—he now despised himself as *dust* and *ashes*, as nothing, nay less than nothing and vanity, in comparison of God and his greatness; and knew now very well, what a foolish and rash undertaking it was, to set himself in the least degree against God, whose *works are only honourable and glorious*,* against whom none can prevail, neither do any thing contrary to his will, *all nations*, with all their own conceptions, *being before him as nothing*, and are counted to him *less than nothing, and vanity*.†—He esteemed himself not worthy to receive the least favour from God, and owned his hand in the visitations of chastisements inflicted upon him; with shame and confusion he abhorred and despised himself, because of his immoderate, rash, and indecent language and complaints, all which he condemned:—But to proceed, as he

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* Ps. ciii. 3. † Isaiah xl. Ps. lxii.

was deeply humbled and abased, so it will appear he was much dejected, when he farther saith,

2. And *I repent in dust and ashes*. The word *repentance*, in the genuine language signifies an alteration of the soul, and its affections; whether it be from sadness into comfort, or from tranquility into repentance; but to take this for comfort, even if the meaning were, I comfort me in *dust* and *ashes*, with God's particular manifestation to me, and conviction of my soul's increase in knowledge and grace.—This, in my humble opinion, would be repugnant to the nature of this expression; because abhorrence here precedes, and *dust* and *ashes* follows; besides, *Job* now being convinced of the imprudence and perverseness of his conduct, his insolent rebellion, stupid insensibility, stubborn undutifulness, forgetful ingratitude, and odious defilement; and viewing it with self-reproach,—he first of all was obliged to confess his sin, to acknowledge God's justice most righteously lighting upon it, and to repent of his iniquities before God, who was thereby so highly offended; thus, by this word must needs be understood *repentance*, even like that of *Ephraim*;—*surely after I was turned*

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I repented,* being a grief and mourning for the sins which we have committed against the glorious God, (whereby we have made ourselves abominable to the divine purity, and abused divine goodness) with a sincere wish that they never had been committed, and in the future may be avoided;—a grief or sorrow then, which differs much from that of the impenitent and unconverted, or of the hypocrite and nominal Christian, whose sorrow and grief for his sins, however distressing it may be, is not *after Godliness*, but *after the world*,† flowing only from a sense of danger and fear of wrath; a sorrow like that of a thief, who for the sake of his crime, sits in custody and mourns for it, but as soon as he is reprieved, all sorrow and grief will quickly cease, all distresses of conscience soon vanish, and with great delight he turns to his former way of living; so it is with such an hypocrite, if there were no punishment nor hell to be feared, he would not mind the sins, (however loathsome they are in the eyes of an holy God) but joyfully follow his sinful course, for he does not hate sin as sin, nor loatheth himself in his own sight, for all his iniquities, pollutions, and abominations, with a groaning after grace, to conquer
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* Jerem. xxxi. 19. † 2 Cor. vii.

and mortify his corruptions, and be free from the empire of sin; no, but he is only restrained by terror, and driven from a course of sinning, by the lashes of an awakened conscience, this being merely the fruit of self-love, which prompts the soul to fly from danger;—but the truly penitent, and divinely enlightened sinner, who has a right apprehension and sense of God's glorious perfections, he acknowledges not only his sins, justifies God's sentence, and condemns himself, but judges of it too, as that which hath defiled him in the sight of his divine Majesty, and is ashamed; hating sin, as offensive to the pure eye of infinite holiness; loathing it, because it is the abominable thing which he hateth, and is become the greatest burthen and aversion of his soul, *I hate*, says the Psalmist, *every false way*, and to whom God gives a *new heart*, and a *new spirit*, it is said, *they shall remember their own evil ways—and their doings which were not good, and shall loath themselves in their own sight for their iniquities and abominations*;*—all which, works in the penitent, a *Godly sorrow*, “ arising from an affecting, humbling, mourning sense of sin; from the view of the sin of nature, with the hard-

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* Ezekiel xxxvi.

* Job

ness of the heart, and universal depravity of the affections, which flow from it; and with a view of the numerous sins of practice, with their special aggravations."—This was the case with Job, he saw his sins, his indecent complaints, vehement expostulations, imprudence, and enormity of his conduct,—he viewed it with self-reproach, it grieved his soul, and,

ii. In the most sorrowful manner he repented, for it was *in dust and ashes*.—When in former days our ancestors were mourning and full of grief and sorrow, they spread *sackcloth and ashes under them, and wallowed themselves in ashes*, yea this appeared in Job himself, *he sat down among the ashes*;*—and so it is here, not to think that this external action should have made up genuine repentance, no, Esau cried, Achab covered himself with *sackcloth*, and the ungodly Jews bowed down their heads as a bulrush, and spread *sackcloth and ashes under them*;† but this was not the thing which the Lord required: no, here the bands of wickedness must be loosed, the heavy burdens undone,—the oppressed let go free, and every yoke to be broken;—consequently, when he speaks of *dust and ashes* this is an emblematical expression only, and signifies

* Job ii. † Isaiah lviii. 5.

fies *mourning, repentance*,—this being unquestionably, respective to the inward frame of *Job's* mourning soul, thereby to denote that he was but *dust and ashes*,* and worthy to be *brought even to the dust*,† —that he had a clear view of his own nothingness, a deep sensibility of the burthen of sin, openly declaring God's just punishment, in a word, herein appeared the deepest submission and *humility, which goes before honour*.‡——Before, now he sat among the *ashes* too, confessed his sins, and despised his life; but his sorrow at that time, was more for the calamities which befel him, more for his sufferings, and so more for seeing himself reduced to such an extremity of misery, than for his sins, by which he had defiled himself before God's Majesty:—But now being possessed with a more clear apprehension and sense of the divine greatness, power, wisdom, goodness, and sovereignty; and especially observing God, in the particular and fatherly government, which was exercised towards himself,—he did loath, abhor, and condemn himself, and was mourning over the sins with which he had dishonoured so great and glorious a Majesty, and with Ezra, as it were *fell down upon his knees, and spread*

out

* Gen. xviii.

† Isaiah xxvi. 5.

‡ Prov. xv. 33.

† Ezr.

out his hands unto the Lord his God, and said, O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee my God, for my iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up unto heaven.†—Thus we see how repentance must needs be accompanied with sorrow and grief, being in holy writ compared to the mourning of parents, which they feel for the loss of an only son, and the bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.*——But here we ought to observe, that this sorrow need not to be of the same nature, and in the same degree as that of others; no, it sufficeth, that it is very great, and that sin is always grievous, hateful, and offensive in our eyes; and so it ought to comfort a great many sincere Christians, who desire in all respects, to have such a grief as others feel on some occasions, and differing from it, immediately conclude they have no sorrow which is *after a Godly sort*.—But to proceed; this humility, and submission of Job, certainly had also been connected with sincere prayers to God, and exercise of faith in the Messiah, for he knew that the Redeemer liveth, and was able and willing to deliver and comfort; he wrestled with him for renewed pardon, and new supplies of strengthening

† Ezra ix. 5, 6.

* Zach. xii. 10.

ing and quickening grace, that he might henceforth live in all holy conversation and Godliness, before the divine Majesty, which he was now fully and sensibly persuaded, it was his indispensable duty, to love, admire, and adore forever; and so doubtless *brought forth fruits meet for repentance* : *—Yea, this is a grief and sorrow for sin, reader, which at all times, as often we fall into it, is highly necessary for a continual *repentance to salvation* ; †—This is that *broken and contrite heart* † which was in David, and that God never will despise. §—This, that mourning soul the Lord Jesus himself will comfort.—And this repentance to God and faith in Christ, is the daily exercise of a true Christian; without renewing it every day, he cannot work out his salvation, (to wit, in Christ Jesus) *with fear and trembling*, ¶ nor rejoice in his God; and no wonder, the most dear and excellent children of God, in many things offend all, their natural language and sorrowful confession is, *we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and our iniquities as the wind have taken us away*; ||—yea so far that they acknowledge to have more sins than

* Matt. iii. 8. † 1 Cor. vii. † Ps. li. § Matt. v. ¶ Phillip. ii. 13. || Isaiah lxiv. 6.

* Ps. xi. ¶ Phil. i.

than they know, crying out with the Psalmist, *who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults!**—And Solomon challenges and summons all believers, *who can say I have my heart clean, I am pure of my sin?*† And with uncontrollable truth he affirms in another place, *there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not;*‡ consequently, far be it from us to assert, that any of the believers can obtain perfection here on earth, which shall be enjoyed in heaven, where *the spirits of just men are made perfect,*§ and where then the body of death shall be put off;—Paul, such an holy man and great apostle, own'd he *had not already attained it, neither was already perfect,*|| but acknowledged himself to be but a poor wretch, because of *the law of sin which was in his members, warring against the law of his mind;*||—and what mortal that is in the least conscious of his own heart, dare pretend to be without sin? Will he not rather confirm the words of the apostle, *if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,* (a) joining with Paul, who assures us *that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God?* (b)—And if we reflect on the petition for forgiveness of sins, in

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* Pl. xix. 12. † Prov. xx. 9. ‡ Eccl. vii. 20. § Heb. xii. 23.
 Phil. iii. 12. || Rom. vii. 23, 24. (a) 1 John i. 8. (b) Rom. iii. 23.

the Lord's prayer, which being never used but by the faithful, already both in communion and peace of the church,—this was the observation generally made by the ancient fathers from this prayer, and which evidently shewed to them the necessity of repentance and pardon, even in a regenerate state; and that a Christian how perfect soever he may appear, or think himself in comparison to others, yet in his Redeemer's account, has need to ask the pardon of his sins.—But not to be large in the proof of those mortifying arguments, doth not experience-teach us, that some who had very high opinions of themselves, and boasted of their full and complete attainments, soon or late have been discovered, and given up to themselves?—Who is he of the children of Adam, that is always on his guard to *keep his mouth as with a bridle,** and *offend not in words?†*—Who is master of his thoughts, and can subdue his passions, that they be always pure, undefiled, and without the least vanity and sin? O, how often we sin by thoughts, words, and deeds! Who discharges his duty towards God and his neighbour? Who leaves off all that is
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* Pf. xxxix. 2.

† James iii. 2.

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against, and practises what is agreeable to Christianity? None, none, indeed! "For not to mention our flagrant sins, which cannot escape our notice, tho' we have a delight in holiness, how many secret sins will appear upon a faithful examination of our own hearts? Let us but compute our unbelieving cares and anxiety for this world, the coldness of our taste for spiritual things, our indiscreet violence for trifles, our omissions in many duties, and our imperfections in all;"—and we shall be fully convinced that no perfect men can be found here on earth, unless it be in our own foolish notions, and not in the persons, who all of them have their particular faults and defects;—do we read of *Noah*, that *he was a just man and perfect in his generation, and walked with God,**—of *Job*, that *he was perfect and upright,†*—of *Zacharias and Elizabeth*, that *they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless?‡*—We must observe, how gloriously soever their conduct be described, that their sins and stumblings also are noted, as well as those of *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Peter, &c.* by which their imperfection appears, and our knowledge and holiness to be *but in part;§*—
that

* Jere. vi. 9.

† Job i. 1.

‡ Luke i. 6.

§ 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

that they are so highly characterized, is to shew their sincerity; they are called perfect comparatively to their opposites, or by way of gospel perfection in *Christ Jesus their head*,* and not that they ever were arrived to an absolute state of perfection; nor can any soul, as long as it dwells in a sinful body, ever arrive to it, tho' we must strive to *be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect*;†—and the reason the Lord hath for not making the believers perfect in holiness, is, 1st, Because there should be a distinction between earth and heaven, between the militant and triumphant church,—and the desires of our soul be the more ardent for such a blessed and perfect state, and cry out with David,—*my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the living God?*‡—2d, To bring his people by degrees only into glory, that sin may cease gradually,—*for he that is dead is freed from sin*.§—3d, Thereby to learn them not to boast of their own works, but merely to acknowledge and depend upon God's free and sovereign grace, as the only ground of salvation, and to account all their several improvements as the effects of grace;—nay, that every

* Eph. v. 27. † Matt. v. 48. ‡ Ps. xlii. 2. § Rom. vi. 7.

every step they advance in goodness, should be thought a fresh argument of his kindness, and a new call for thankfulness on their part, ascribing praise and glory of all things to him,—*not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.**—But to proceed, if this be so, that none can obtain an absolute perfection on earth, but the best of saints have their defects ; How arrogant is the temper then of some perfectionists, who cry down duties and ordinances, as low and unprofitable rudiments, and boast of their extraordinary acquirements ? And what then more necessary for God's people than a daily repentance to God, and faith in Christ, for where we daily sin, there we must daily repent, for none may *continue in sin* ; †—if they would not fall into the utmost misery of a slumbering sleep of death ; however, true Christians will never *continue in sin*, they hate it with perfect hatred, and it is their most deadly enemy ;—nay, no believer can *continue in sin*, because *God's seed remaineth in him*, ‡ as the apostle saith, and *God's right hand holds him up*, that he might not totally fall from him, being *kept by his power unto salvation* ; §—the language of
 God's

* Ps. cxv. 1. † Rom. iv. 1. ‡ 1 John iii. 9. § 1 Pet. i. 5.

God's people is with the church, *rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me,**—and they return daily to the Lord, to wit, by faith in Christ, for where no faith is, there is no reconciliation to God, consequently no comfort, no joy in the Lord;—for this therefore God's children also daily exercise faith in Christ, it is their continual cry with the father of the child, *I'd I believe, help thou mine unbelief,†* or with the apostles, *Lord increase our faith,*—they daily take hold of God's strength, and make peace with him, knowing that he made him,† i. e. Christ, to be sin, or a sin offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.§—So then, day by day, they exercise themselves in the faith; and even as repentance makes them shed tears for their sins, so faith makes them pray with confidence for grace;—as repentance causes them to confess their trespasses unto the Lord, so the prayer of faith receives the precious blessing, that the believer humbly may glory in the forgiveness of his manifold transgressions.—Hence then, we see how Christians do sin, and fall; but also daily

* Micah vii. 8. † Mark ix. 24. † Isaiah xxvii. 5. § 2 Cor. v. 21.

daily rise by sincere repentance and unfeigned faith, and on which only God will turn to the true penitent with his favour; without this repentance the sins of David could not be forgiven,—he could not *hear of joy and gladness—the bones which the Lord had broken could not rejoice*; without true repentance, *Manasseh* could not be brought to *Jerusalem*, neither the *Publican* go to his house justified;*—and so it was with *Job*, without true repentance and the deepest humiliation before God, he could not be restored, but loathing, abhorring, condemning himself for, and groaning under the burden of his sins, joined with true faith in the Redeemer, and with earnestness and contrition, intreating the pardon of his trespasses, the Lord heard his prayers and was reconciled unto him; yea established him in his former splendour, and made him twice as rich as he was before.—

Thus, we have seen the motive and nature of true repentance, or how *Job*, with a divinely enlightened, and spiritual eye, having seen God's Majesty,—with shame and confusion of face, self-reproach, and abhorrence, in the most sorrowful manner, repented of those offences of which he was guilty before God,
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* 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. Luke xviii.

and for whose remission he prayed; withal how the Lord accepted of his repentance, and afterwards shewed him extraordinary marks of his favour.—But it is time to proceed to the

A P P L I C A T I O N.

How happy would it be, if we all could say with Job, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes?*—And thus upon such an humiliation we also may be exalted.—But alas! The Lord speaks to us by his works, to wit, by his creating, preserving, and governing the world, thereby manifesting his infinite power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, and justice ;—he speaks to us in his word, thereby revealing himself in the splendour of his adorable and admirable perfections ;—he gloriously appears to us in his beloved Son, in whom he is able and willing to become the God of an insolent, rebellious, hell-deserving sinner ;—but where is *the hearing of the ear*? Come my dear souls, examine yourselves! And not to mention the works of nature, and God's moral government, by which he so loudly speaks to us of his glorious perfections, but not being heard and reflected by the most of his rational creatures,

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will it not even appear, that in regard to the hearing of the word of God, it is greatly neglected, little taken to heart, and the number of professing Christians, that have delight in it very small? Do not a great many, under pretence of Christian liberty, live as if they were not bound to it? Or be it so, that they frequent the preaching of it; is it with a right view to give a due attention, joined with earnest prayers and sighings, that the Lord may bring it home to the soul, that it may be renewed by his blessed Spirit? In no wise, besides a great many having no education in the language, understand even as little of an English sermon as they do of the papist and latin liturgy; but most people give their attendance,--merely from a principle of a pharisaical righteousness, to quiet the conscience with an external performance, or from education and custom, because from their infancy they are forced and used to it; or from ambition, and honour, in order that they might not be counted irreligious; or from self-interest, not to discontent those who insist upon their attendance, and by whom they have their wealth; or from pomp and pride, to shew their gorgeous apparel, thereby to attract the eyes of the people, and excite their admiration,

tho' all their finery very often is as unsuitable, as a *jewel of gold in a swine's snout*; †— and shall I mention more? Many come to church only because they are charmed with the gifts and talents of the ministers, whether they are really such or but imaginary, and to *speak thereof by the walls and in the doors of the houses*, even as the hearers of *Ezekiel*, to whom he was as a *very lovely song, of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument*; *—but this is all, for the worship being finished, they pursue their sinful course of living, and remain under the best talents, as insensible and obstinate as under the meanest:—Or shall I speak of another motive of going to church, which every where greatly prevails among men? It is because the one or the other Minister has the popularity, which they will set forth, and to that purpose *cry out with the craftsmen at Ephesus,—great is Diana of the Ephesians*, ‡ and very often worship that *great Goddess*, I mean the creature, more than the great Creator,—perhaps for the very same reason, as the above-mentioned *craftsmen*; tho' I believe some poor ignorant souls amongst them, do not know for what; but those admirers and applauders, afterwards being offended at
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† Prov. xi. 22.

• Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31.

‡ Acts xix.

such a popular preacher, because of the one or the other debility, or real or pretended injury, or his fidelity, plainness, and piety, he now abstaining himself from their companies, which he was formerly too much engaged in, and upon an excess of recreation, or when his preaching is become an old song, those admirers I say, *cry out, crucify him, crucify him*,—and that with the same zeal as they before *cried Hosanna !* O vile and miserable temper of mankind ! “ Who would depend on popularity” and the admiration of gaping crowds ? “ Which is like the *morning cloud and early dew*, that passeth away,” as a certain popular preacher himself in one of his printed sermons, expresseth it in the prophets phrase, *Hosea vi.* besides, it is an argument of an haughty spirit to be delighting itself, at least immoderately, and without looking on high, in popular praise and acclamations ; “ and of a loose and ungoverned mind to be affected with the promiscuous approbation of the generality of mankind,” which is beneath the character of a wise and pious man, who *loveth the praise of God more than the praise of men* ;*—and it is no advantage to reputation at all to receive the applause and praise of the ignorant, who cannot be good judges
of

* John xii. 43.

of the actions for which they bestow it:" O that every man who at present may be an object of admiration and general praise, especially Christ's ministers, would be convinced of its vanity, and beware of not setting their heart upon being admired by the multitude; I may here give to their due consideration, that latin motto, which Dionysius, King of Sicilia, as a piece of wisdom, bought for a good sum of money, from a Philosopher, and continually made use of, nay even saved his life by it.—*Quid quid agis, prudenter agas, et respice finem.**——But to say yet more, are there some, that have a delight in hearing the truth, and being very much pleased with a sound sermon? Those content themselves only with a speculative knowledge, mean while *denying the power of Godliness*, of which they may not hear;—or others, who appear to be desirous of the truth, and sometimes very much affected, remain from year to year the same, without being a whit better than before; and are like those *silly women*, of whom Paul speaks, *who are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.†*

Lo reader! So is the conduct, so the temper of many, in the midst of Christianity,

* *Whatever ye do, do it prudently, and consider the end.* † 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

anity, concerning the hearing of the word ; and how then can it be possibly expected, that they should *search the scriptures*, and fix their eyes upon the law and gospel of God, in order that they might get a view of the divine perfections, so gloriously displayed in it, and know the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus ? Alas ! If knowledge and understanding, without the use of means, should fall down like a shower from heaven, as the *manna*, at the time of *Israel* ; or by certain invisible channels, without trouble and reluctance, flow into the heart ; or as by a rushing mighty wind inspire the soul ; or by merely hearing two or three sermons a week ; and thus without price or study, (suitable to the *desire of the slothful*) quickly could be conveyed and ingrafted into the mind ; then methinks, a good many would like the knowledge of spiritual and divine things, better than ignorance ; but to toil and moil, to strive and pray for it, to attend more or less catechizing, and take a little pains in learning the fundamental principles of religion by heart ; and to read the bible to find out the very scope of the spirit, to compare spiritual things with spiritual, to converse and discourse upon theological topics, with sound, pious, expert divines, and

and experienced Christians, and instead of squandering money in needless trifles and gallantries, romantick stories, and harlot's songs, to lay it out for some solid useful and edifying books, and employ a part of the day for family devotion ;—moreover, to leave the worldly companies, and those continually teasing visits, so often joined to idle chat, slander and sinful diversions ; and retiredly to meditate on the word of God, and his manifestations.—This amongst the generality of the rich and poor, the high and low, is not counted to be of great importance, and by some impossible to be done.—Thus they remain in gross ignorance, if not heathenish blindness towards God, Christ, and the beauty of his Majesty ; of the sinfulness of sin, the misery of an unpardoned state, the worth of a Saviour, or the nature and necessity of repentance towards God, and faith towards Christ ; or concerning the sacraments, *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, their spiritual signification, and the vows made at presenting their children to be baptized, or at eating the bread and drinking the wine in the *Lord's supper*,—The gross ignorance thereof is unspeakable!—If we in regard to *baptism*, should ask a great many parents, Godfathers and Godmothers,

mothers, coming out of the church, and having their children baptised, what they answered to the solemn questions on such occasion generally asked, by the ministers, they would perhaps give the same reply, as the man of whom a Dutch divine records, that after being asked, what he by the administration of *baptism* to his child, had answered to the queries of the minister ; did say, *that he very well remembereth, he at that time had faithfully promised upon the demands of the minister, to attend from morning till night his business, and diligently take care of it.*—Lo reader ! this was the surety of a father ; standing for his own child, this was an answer to all those serious questions ! What expectation can we ever have from such a dull ignorant creature, in performing his indispensable duties towards his child ? Indeed not any, yet of the same sort of parents and Godfathers, we find a great many still in our days ;—but, so gross the ignorance is of *baptism*, even so gross it is of the *Lord's supper*, a multitude of communicants, knowing hardly any thing of the body and blood of Christ, of the feeding upon it, of the benefits of his death, neither what belongs to a real communicant, or the characteristicks they must examine themselves by, and be
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possessed of, if they shall worthily receive that awful sacrament :—O ! Great shame for a Christian and protestant nation, sitting under the rays of so clear a gospel light, above thousands and millions around them, that are deprived of it, not considering, that ignorance is the source of unnumbered and most fatal mischiefs to the soul,* and that a right apprehension of the great God, and his revealed will, is so highly “ necessary to constitute the Christian’s character, and be his sure guide in the way of eternal life,” †—but are resting upon that false foundation, *that he who knows not much, will have not much to answer for*,—a rock of conceit indeed ! on which multitudes of souls have been cast away, and sunk into the dreadful abyss of outer darkness ; and which sad and melancholy fate will also surely befall those, that remain in such a detestable ignorance : See their awful doom pronounced, 2 Th. i. 8, 9.—But to proceed to a further inquiry, By this *hearing of the ear* is not only to be understood an external *hearing* of the divine truth ; but also and more particularly, an hearing with a due attention, with a strong and lively conviction, and sensible apprehension of God’s infinite beauty and

* Hof. iv. 6.

† John xvii, 3.

and glory, as if you saw it before your eyes, and felt it with your hands.—Well, do ye know something of this? Doth the temper and tone of your soul relish, correspond and harmonize with such kinds of apprehendings?—I don't doubt but a great many if they would consult with their own consciences, would be obliged to acknowledge, that all their views and apprehensions of God, till now, have been but speculative and curious; a knowledge puffing them up,—a judgment light and unsettled, which bears no prevailing influence in the heart, is without the least sensibility, astonishment, love and due reverence, and leaves the soul obscure, destitute of all tender affections and desires after the triune God, and his communion;—and of whom we may say, if they don't see God with a spiritual eye, and more sensible apprehension of his intrinsic worth and glorious excellencies, and so in some measure, in being as he is, that they are not to be counted amongst those, to whom *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory has given the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, by which they may know what is the exceeding greatness of the power of his name, to those who believe according to the working of his mighty power;*

—nor amongst those who sincerely fear the Lord, and *love him with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind,* as being the precise duty which God requires in his law, Matt. xxii. and which can never be performed without a true knowledge and lively sense of God's infinite glory and beauty ; for where this is wanting (concerning any object whatever) there can be no love, nor true unfeigned repentance ; for “ he who is “ ignorant of the beauty of God's real “ character, is blind to the chief thing “ wherein his blame lies ; and while he “ does not see his blame, he will see no “ occasion to repent ;” he thinks his state is not so bad, that his sins are but small trifles, perjury and avarice are not great crimes in his opinion, unbelief and hypocrisy, lust and intemperance, he little regards, to accustom himself to sinful mirth and railery, spending his precious time in vain and unprofitable company, if not in scandal, evil speaking, and backbiting, nipping and filthy jests, idle chat, and telling stories, this is of no weight to him ;—to defile his soul with profaneness, his body with lasciviousness,—to deceive, to mock, disdain, and oppress his fellow-men,—to be inexorable to the cries of the poor and distressed, but to laugh

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at their miseries,—these are all things which he counts but little of;—nay, permit me reader, to say here, as by an interval,—that charity to the poor and distressed is as much decayed in ours, as in any former age ; O ! what a multitude of *Nabals* do we find, who are only proging for themselves, without having the least thing left to the poor,*—right down Cains, who won't be their *brother's keeper*? †—With what a disgust and frowning countenance, look they upon them, when they ask for an alms! *The one* says what I possess I am myself in want of, I can give nothing to an other, I must take care of my own, to maintain myself. *The other*, I cannot help every body, there are so many needy,—in the meantime, the pocket is shut up from all.—*The third*, I am often deceived by them, and do not know whether they deserve it, and *the fourth*, more polite says, *depart in peace be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding he gives them not those things which are needful to the body.* ‡—In a word, there are hardly *bowels of mercies* shewn, tho' expressly commanded, § worth while to be read and remembered, and besides, the record we could give of the many
bowels

* 1 Sam. xxv. 11. † Gen. iv. 9. ‡ James ii. 16. § Isaiah lviii. 7. Deut. xv. 7.

bowels of compassion our Saviour himself hath shewn to the poor, I beg of you see but *Job xxxi. 16, 20.*—O! how many will come short, and yet think little of it? nevertheless the neglect of charity is a great sin, counted amongst those for which Sodom was destroyed, viz. because they did not *strengthen the hands of the poor and needy*;^{*}—and how can there be *faith or love* in the unmerciful? The Apostle proves its impossibility; *whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*† He will say it cannot be, and no wonder, for he who shews, nay proclaims before all the world, by his unmerciful temper, that *covetousness, the root of all evil*, is still powerful in him, and the continual bleedings and lowings of his soul after created, yet transient goods, manifestly bewray him, cannot possibly with any face pretend to true religion, or a feeling acquaintance with God, and the things of his kingdom, and all his hope for a future happiness is in vain;—*whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, and shall not be heard*,†—nay, he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed

^{*} Ezek. xvi. 49. † : John iii. 17. † Prov. xxi. 13.

*shewed no mercy; §—O! might the Lord God be pleased to send it home to the heart, and every one endeavour to be charitable according to his estate, knowing that a little of the needy is as agreeable to the Lord as the abundance of the rich, Mark xii. 42.—only that this might not be used as a cloak of avarice.—But to proceed, a farther effect of the want of knowledge of God's real character, is this, When a formal professor, pleading his freedom from harming others, his exactness in duties, his fair shew in the flesh, having no gross sins resting on him, but benevolence and good deeds; then, the more is persuaded of his honesty and good comportment, thanking God, *he is not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this man,** and boasting with Laodicea, *to be rich, and increased in goods and to have need of nothing, when he was poor and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked; †*—or others go about to excuse themselves from their hearts, saying that tho' their lives be evil, yet they have a good heart towards God; whereas the heart of sinners is the worst part in them, as clearly appears by the fruits that come forth, of lying and swearing, drinking and*

§ James ii. 13. Compared with Mat. xxv. 41, 40.
 † Reve. iii.

* Luke xviii.

and rioting, cursing and backbiting, and the general want of honesty, generosity, benevolence and charity ;—a very bad sign indeed, of a holy root, that sends forth such unclean fruits ! O desperate blindness, that possesses the hearts of men ! Is this to be *renewed in the spirits of your minds* ? Is this to have your *heart purified by faith* ? Is this to be *of the pure in heart, and to bring forth good things out of the good treasure of the heart* ? Nay is this to *love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as your selves* ? Surely no, but on the contrary, proves that your heart is the worst part in you, that it never has been washed in the blood of Christ, nor sprinkled from an evil conscience, but is still *darkened, uncircumcised and defiled ; from which proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*—But to go farther, there is another kind of people too, in the midst of Christianity, and these are those who entertain such a strong opinion of themselves, that they can see none going beyond them in regularity, decency and services,—that they are peculiar favourites of heaven, that their conversation deserves and demands some regard of God towards them, they confidently trust upon their formal prayers
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and alms, or perhaps fastings too, assuring themselves that all this shall not be in vain;—a clear proof indeed, that they never have read or given a due attention to what we find in the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. i. 10, 20.—(It is worth their while to peruse it) Or others, building upon their false and airy imaginations, will rejoice and triumph—being fully persuaded that they are the children of God,—while (with all their outward appearances) they remain in their sinful state of nature, as well as the most careless sinners;—they never found themselves to be so sinful as they are,—poor helpless creatures, cast upon mercy, and whose main business it ought to be, by the grace of God, to get out of sin and above this world, to live holy before the most high, with fear, love, and sincere obedience to his law and precepts.—It is true there are some who disdain scandalous vices, cannot endure knavery, drunkenness, or lewdness; but in what manner do they abhor them? Only from custom and the judgment of the world, but not hating sin because God hates it, because of the dishonour it brings upon his government, because of its real filthiness, (so inconsistent with God's purity) and of its ingratitude in the presence of a merciful father,—not
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abhorring every sin, the pride, stubbornness and unbelief of their own heart, as well as the gross sins of others, which they are so continually crying out upon:—No, their own transgressions they can pass over lightly, and think little of them,*—being very well contented if they force a tear in the remembrance of some blacker passages of their lives, when the decency of some more solemn action will seem to demand it from them,—they would not choose God's law if they could avoid it;—O how often they take offence at it! how often they are ready to believe it is not so strict and exact as it is suspected to be by those earnest and zealous

* Here methinks it is exactly suitable to the subject, to communicate to the reader, a peculiar, yet pretty illustration (mentioned in history) of the words of our blessed Saviour, Matt. vii. 3.—*Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam, that is in thine own eye.*—A certain *Abbot* commanded that two bags should be brought to him, of different bignesses, and after having filled them with sand, he took the largest and laid it on his back, but the smallest he held in his hand, looking steadily to the latter, without turning his eyes from it.—The other brethren of the convent being present, and surprised at such a singular action, asked the *Abbot*, what all this signified? To which he answered, in the largest bag are my innumerable sins, which I cast behind my back, that I should not see them; but in the smallest are the sins of my neighbours, which I daily see and condemn,—a thing (said he) very wrong and unjust, inconsistent with the character of a true Christian;—and I may subjoin to it, a clear demonstration that self-love is one of the greatest evils in the hearts of men.

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zealous preachers, usually, and without distinction, by some called legal preachers, or revilers, wranglers, babblers, and counted to be men that have their heads full of crotchets, if not by some poor, blind, ignorant, yet carnal minded souls, characterized as hereticks.—And why? Because that sort of people, being generally the worst and guiltiest, cannot bear the least disturbance of their mind, or to be awakened out of their sinful sleep, and interrupted by the alarming trumpet of the law, in their delightful dream, or that their *Gods which they have made should be taken away*;—what wonder then they like to hear none but mealy mouth'd preachers, that come with soft smooth and toothless words, and prophesy nothing but what is *good* and comfortable, even as the prophets of Baal did, in the days of *Abab*, king of Israel, and for which they were greatly esteemed by him? but *Micajah* the prophet, who would *speake only what the Lord said unto him, was very much hated*, as we see to be the king's open declaration unto *Jehoshaphat*,—*I hate him for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil* :*—And this is even the same temper of a great many in our Christendom, they cannot bear the

H h truth,

* 1 Kings xxii. 8.

truth, they dislike to be reprov'd, or as the Prophet expresseth it, *they hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly*;*—yea I may add to it, they do, not seldom, all they can to hinder him in the pursuit of his ministry, consequently in the possibly wholesome effects of it too; and if it lay in their power, they would totally silence him, if not like the malicious and spiteful *Jews*, relative to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *expel him out of their coasts*.† And why? because they will have the ministers to preach, speak, and do what they approve of, they will have more room and indulgence given them, they cannot digest the nicity and exactness the law enjoins, they prefer a religion which is more suitable to corrupt nature, and which does not require so much attendance,—they regard God's law with a secret aversion to it, and all the obedience they pay is against the grain;—[if not with blasphemous Antinomians, persuading themselves, that under the dispensation of the gospel there remains no law to regulate their conduct, that they are under no bonds to obedience, that they have no commands to transgress, and therefore no sins to lament, nor cause to be humbled for

* Amos v. 10.

† Acts xiii. 50.

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for them, and to pant after deliverance, nor to mind any reproofs, threatenings and admonitions of those raging preachers, as they call them, consequently, whose vile and abominable opinion seems to be, that the blessed Saviour has shed his precious blood to open a door to all kinds of licentiousness, and came to legitimate a lawless, careless, worldly and sensual life ;]—there it is so clear that Christ, “ tho’ he hath fulfilled the law, he hath fulfilled it to establish it, and not to vacate or destroy it, but that it should remain as a rule of living, as the standard or directory of our conduct ;” and in which respect the blessed Saviour himself assured us, that *it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than one tittle of the law to fail ;**—and who came with a quite other view, than such licentious people imagine, which was not to give us a license for sin, but to *redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;*†—as also the great Apostle Paul, who was quite of another opinion than those carnalists, when he asked, *do we then make void the law by faith ? God forbid: Yea we establish the law.*‡——But what shall we say, reader ?

* Luke xvi. 17.

† Tit. ii. 14.

‡ Rom. iii. 31.

der? So it is with the state and condition of all those who never have had a lively and sensible apprehension of God's glory; they are blind, entertaining high opinions of themselves, and towering imaginations of their goodness, and possessing the divine favour,—while they have never known sin as sin, never been broken under the sense of it and its misery, never humbled nor lost, nor driven to Christ, as a refuge only, for guilty sinners, and to be renewed by his divine Spirit, to live holy before the most high.—No, but there are even some, whose consciences being awfully awakened, and convinced of their self-deficiency, and inconformity to the law of God, which makes them tremble at his vindictive justice, and very much disturbs their minds, that are ignorant and impudent enough,—in order to silence the clamours and accusations of their consciences, to call this a *whim*, *maggotty fancy*, or *melancholy fit*, and attempt to divert it as soon as possible; if not, applying themselves to the physicians, that they may remove their dumpishness, and prevent a farther overflowing of black *choler*.*

Now

* By which *choler*, is to be understood “ a hot and dry yellow humour contained in the gall bladder, and how much that disease differs from a soul's disorder,” a man of common

Now in this ignorance and blindness men will remain, till the brightness of a divine light irradiates the soul, and opens his eyes; whereby he “ begins to “ see things as in fact they are, God’s “ character infinitely amiable and glorious, his law wholly right, himself infinitely odious, and his own ways as “ wrong and criminal as that supposes,” declaring himself to be unclean *from the soul of his foot, even unto the head, having no soundness in him*, he saith with Job, *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?*—He sees himself polluted in his own blood, and abominable in the eyes of the most holy One;—he regards himself as a sinner, deserving death, whom mercy only suffers to live and hope; he begins to be ashamed and sorry, upon the reflection of his past sins, and the consideration of his wretched condition; his heart is smitten within, and bleeds as it were for the inward wounds it sees in its own conscience;—
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common sense may easily judge; and I would humbly advise the physicians when they meet with such patients, not to apply any kind of medicines to them, before they have accurately examined their disease; and finding it does not concern the physical profession, to send them immediately to an expert and faithful Minister, that by the divine blessing, they may safely be cured, and rejoice in their soul’s physician, Christ Jesus.

it vents itself in all the sorrowful expressions of inward trouble, and mourns and laments for its grievous wickedness; and this inward sense, and Godly sorrow, if it continue upon the mind, and goes not off like *the morning dew*, will bring the penitent, not only to confession and humiliation, even unto *dust and ashes*, acknowledging that, if God should mark iniquity, he could not stand before him,—but remembering that with God there is *forgiveness*, that he may be feared, and that *with him there is plenteous redemption*, he comes before a mercy seat, he looks to the blood of Christ, as what alone can cleanse away his numerous and aggravated sins,—and under a deep impression of his guilt and unworthiness, cries out with David, *wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! purge me and I shall be whiter than snow.**—It is the hearty wish of his soul to be delivered from them all, and through the mercy of Jesus Christ, to receive grace and strength, that he may forsake them all for the future, and his heart and life be entirely subject to the law and will of God.—So then the true penitent is breathing with the same earnestness after sanctification, as after freedom from wrath;—there is nothing he
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* Psalm li.

so much desires, besides an interest in Christ, and the favour of God, as a freedom from sin, and a proficiency in faith and holiness; to live nigh to, and in communion and fellowship with God and Christ, *here* and *hereafter* forever.

“ 1st. Here, to partake continually of his divine Spirit, to be more and more conformed to the divine will, to be made a partaker of the divine nature, “ to have Christ dwelling in him, and he in Christ, to have the same mind in him, that is in Christ,—to walk even as he walked,—to regulate his affections, appetites, passions, and his whole conduct and conversation, even as he did.

2d. Hereafter, to receive the full communications of his grace in heaven, when he will be perfectly delivered from all the remainders of sin and corruption, when all the powers and faculties of his soul will be brought into a glorious conformity unto Christ himself, when he will be like him, see him as he is, and be completely qualified for the ravishing joys of the heavenly state, and the eternal praises of redeeming love !”

If you can say reader, This is the sight and sense I have of myself, and all spiritual things, this is my study, herein I have, and do exercise myself; and tho’

I come short, yet I sincerely aim at it; then you may count yourself amongst the true penitents: But if not, all your high pretences to extraordinary attainments in religion, cannot give you a title to that character;—as little as the most careless sinner,—both he and you are the natural man still, notwithstanding the different appearance you make; for the true penitent is humble, constantly crying to God for fresh supplies of grace, and strength from the fulness of Christ, to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*;—makes a business of religion, is watchful, and has his greatest delight in holiness, and spiritual walking with God,—resting in no degree of attainments whatsoever.—If this be true reader? for God and your own salvation's sake, don't rest any more upon a false foundation, nor think a spiritual and sensible sight of God's glory, the brightness, beauty, and amiableness of the divine nature, to be of no value;—or that whatever men's principles of religion may be if their lives be but externally honest, civil, sober and inoffensive, they can yet obtain salvation?—An assertion indeed, which duly considered, will not only take away the spirit of Christianity, and be enough to enthrone that horrible monster, atheism;—but is
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also contrary to both reason and scriptures ; for who is he, (reflecting upon God's vindictive justice as well as mercy, by which eternal punishments will be inflicted upon the unregenerate, and observing his design in saving sinners in Christ only) that can be of opinion, God without denying his perfections, should save men, who never in any degree have had a right apprehension and sensible sight of him, and so consequently no love to him, nor faith in Christ, conformity to his law, nor compliance with the gospel, but acquiesced in a mere empty form of outward duties, or dishonoured God by false worship?—If this opinion can pass for current, then I must say, with a certain Divine, the “ Gentiles, Jews and Mahometans may be saved as well as Christians, and the heathen nations need not so much trouble themselves to know who is the right God, among all the Gods, that are worshipped in the world; for it is no matter which God they think is the true, if their lives be but good.” O strange and detestable notion ! So contrary to the design of God in revealing himself in his word, for this purpose, that we should sensibly know him, and to the doctrinal points urged in scripture ! —Beware, beware of it my friends ; nei-

ther join to the sentiments of all those several sects and pretended Christians in our days, who care not whatever men's principles be, if they but love the Saviour, being full of *flaming zeal*;—nor what we are zealous about, if we are but *flaming hot*;" tho' in the mean time it seems they do not believe the Saviour's own words, when he saith *and this is life eternal, that they might know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*:*—Besides this, is it not written by the apostle, that it is *impossible without faith to please God*? And must not *he that cometh to God believe that he is*? ‡—Or can we humble ourselves before, and adore, obey and honour God, without having in a measure, right and sensible apprehensions of him? My dear friends, what is become of your rational part? Behold the thing I plead for in Job himself, who never had been so deeply humbled, nor glorified God, before his heart in a special manner was touched, and more sensibly affected with the splendour of his beautiful, amiable, and adorable perfections; nay even, could not have been called, *a man that was perfect, and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil*—† long before this divine and glorious revelation to him, unless
he

* John xvii. 3.

† Heb. xii. 6.

† Job i. 1.

he had seen God in some measure, to be such an one as he is, and had a sense of his infinite glory and beauty, in being such, without which none can love, fear, and serve him, as I have already demonstrated in the first discourse, upon the true service of God.—And the more clear and sensible our sight is of God's moral character, the more it will appear amiable and glorious ; and the more glorious it appears, the more we shall be humbled, and our hearts filled with supreme love to, and reverential awe for it :—Neither appeal to your morality and civility, see *Jobs* virtuous life, which your's cannot be compared with,—nor plead the mercy of God,—for his majesty and justice are also to be feared ;—nor Christ's atonement, it is for those only that are mourning, humbled, and self-condemned.—O! come then ye poor, blind, and deluded souls, pray the Lord to *enlighten the eyes of your understanding, that ye may with open face, behold as in a glass, his glory, and thus be changed after the same image* :*—Run by faith, to Christ the son of righteousness, the light of the world ; nay, truth and light itself, and the fountain of all light, who alone is able to give you a clear and sensible apprehension of the divine

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

divine glory and beauty ; nay, wrestle so long with him, till you see and heartily approve God's eternal power and infinite wisdom, justice and holiness ; consider him in supreme sovereignty, regard his goodness, as being willing to make happy, and his mercy sparing to consume a world of rebels,—mercy, pardoning, and goodness embracing returning apostates.

Then humble yourselves before him, shew that you repent not from a mere self-love, flowing from a sense of danger and fear of wrath, with the most distressing sorrow on that account, but from an high sense and lively conviction of God's infinite greatness, and the purity and holiness of the divine nature, which by your sins so greatly have been dishonoured ;-----mourn, lament, and bewail all your heart sins,—let your *head be waters, and your eyes a fountain of tears, yea smite the rock of your stony heart, that waters of repentance and humiliation, with self-loathing, self-abasing, and self-condemning, may abundantly issue:—And let your language be such as that, I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me, mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me,—deliver me from all my transgressions,*

*gressions,—let not my sins have dominion over me.—Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up : They are more than the hairs of mine head ; therefore my heart faileth me,—be pleased O Lord ! to deliver me, O Lord make haste to help me.—Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously, so will I render the calves of my lips :—*And be henceforth resolved, by the concurrence of God's Spirit, to forsake all the sins you are guilty of, and to practise the contrary virtues ; to live holy before God, in sincere obedience to his law and precepts, without which all our sorrow and inward repentance will be of no avail.—For if we consider the nature of God, we cannot suppose that our sorrow or grief, which in the degree of it, is misery itself, can for its own sake be acceptable to him ; bare sorrow is what he rather dislikes, than likes, but it is that *Godly sorrow* only that grieves the soul for sinning against so holy, good and bountiful a God,—proceeding from a high esteem for and love to God, and his blessed communion, to live suitably to so glorious a Majesty.—A sorrow that brings forth amendment and alteration, which he approves as a work wrought by his own hand in the heart of the sinner :—

And

And if we consider the nature of our holy religion, we shall find that the end and design of it was not to beget in us a little sorrow for sin, or conviction of guilt, or dread of punishment;* but *to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and*

* Observe here, that to depend upon a little sorrow for sin, or conviction of guilt, or dread of punishment, is very often the case with some, who have no right apprehensions of spiritual things, viz. when their conscience being awakened and grieved, which now and then is accompanied with turbulent motions, they firmly believe this to be the true conversion; the more, while by others, and sometimes by those who are well meaning, yet blind and ignorant, it is too rashly looked upon as orthodox and genuine.—Thus the anxious souls, being congratulated on their new birth from heaven, it strengthens them the more in their high and exalted imagination, mean while all their confidence is built upon vanity.—Of such new and hasty born converts, we very often hear in our days,* but also their conscience by their own false notions, being for a time quieted, or as by inexpert mountebanks, gently cured, that the old distemper appears again, and sometimes very soon; or to use the phrase of the prophet,—*whose whole head remains sick, and whose whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither molified with ointment:—*Or according to the true proverb,—*the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.**—And the same concerned sinners, who by the credulous were counted to be sound Christians indeed, are in a short time as ungodly and insensible as ever before.—In the mean time, by their dissembling and scandalous conduct, with all the good opinion, approbation and affirmation thereof by others, the divine Majesty becomes dishonoured, religion contemned, and a game is made of true piety. O dreadful! let every one beware of not hurting, by such hypocrisy and imprudent precipitation, the cause of real Christianity.

* Mai. i. 5, 6. 2 Pet. ii. 22. Compare herewith Jere. vi. 14. viii. 13.

and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world ;—that being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, we may have our fruits unto holiness, and our end everlasting life.*—Or do you ask how can I do this, unless the Lord by his sovereign grace, and the working of his mighty power shall cause and enable me to do it ? We answer, this wo'nt excuse you at all, poor finners ! or take away your indispensable duty in using the means the Lord has appointed, as the way in which he usually confers his grace for Christ's sake, altho' they do not merit it ; and tho' the unconverted can do nothing that is "*spiritually* good, yet he as a rational creature can do what is *materially* good, viz. he can *pray, hear the word, and give alms*, without *faith*, without *love*, without *giving alms* from a *principle of divine charity*; the latter being the form in which it is to be done, if he neglect the performance of these duties, which he as a natural man can perform ; he makes himself guilty of an open affronting denial ;" besides, man as a rational creature, in what state soever he finds himself, is always depending on God, and is obliged to obey the supreme Being, as his creator, and benefactor; Jere. x. 6, 7.

And

* Tit. ii. xi. 12.

And the wilful disobedience of man, cannot take away God's right in demanding a continual and perfect obedience from him, even as a creditor has a just right to payment, altho' his debtor should become insolvent. But what need have I to enlarge upon this unreasonable opinion, [which the worldling will quiet his conscience with,—change men into brutes, argue God's sovereign pleasure, if not as Adam, lay the crime to God's charge,] since this is skilfully done by other divines, and reading their writings you will find no reason for a plea.—Mean while, take advice my dear friends, and so many of you as have hitherto walked so contrary to the glorious God, “ have trampled upon his excellent perfections, violated his holy laws, and made so near an approach even to the nature of the devil; ”—repent to God, and make a speedy application, by faith, to the atoning blood of the lamb of God; be not at rest before the Lord has created in you a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within you;—let these breathings and sighings, proceed from you,—*O that my ways were directed, that I might keep thy statutes, O! let me not wander from thy commandments, but deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.*—These being the “ aspirations

rations of a sincere repentance, a language which flows from a true love to God and his law, and an earnest desire of conformity to both;"—or do you say again, I cannot do this by myself, I cannot sigh, I cannot pray, I cannot repent nor believe, I cannot break this vile and unruly will, this stony diamond heart? —Well, I know it my friends, and it would be the greatest pride of you to think that you could do it by your own power; but are you sensible of that bad temper and disposition of your mind, by which you are render'd unable to think or do any thing acceptable unto God, and that you see it is the Lord to work and to do all for the soul he intends to save? Well then lie down, not sluggishly, but humbly at the feet of God, and say, *draw me O Lord, and I will run after thee, turn thou me and I shall be turned*, reveal thy truth unto me and I shall know it, enable me and I shall practise it, strengthen me and I shall maintain it;—and are you willing henceforth to live for and to God, and forever to be disposed of in any thing by God, if he will but fulfill his promises in you? Well, then nothing can hinder you from going to Christ Jesus, that only name given under heaven, by which we can be saved,* and who never cast out those,

K k

those,

* Acts iv.

those, that under a sense of their inability sincerely came to him and sought their salvation in his communion;—and no wonder, he *does not call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**—Sinners, who are *dead in trespasses and sins.†*—Sinners having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God.—Sinners, whose *carnal mind is enmity against God, and not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,†* because of the enmity and pride of the heart, of the gross blindness of the mind, of the stubbornness and obstinacy of the will.—And to say once more, *sinners, the chief of sinners, for whom Christ has given himself, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.§*—If they but earnestly long and are willing to come to Christ, giving their hearts, as bad as unclean, as unwilling and unable as they are, only to him, that he might change and write his law in them, and that they might, *walk in his statutes, to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life.¶*—Thus then no excuses can you plead, there is an all-sufficiency in Christ, he can and will become the God of health and

* Matt. ix. 13.

† Eph. ii. 1.

† Eph. ix.

§ Tit. 2, 14.

¶ Luke i. 74, 75.

and everlasting salvation, to those that upon his kind invitation come to, and cleave unto him by ardent desire; and you, as a rational being, are unavoidably obliged *to work out your salvation* in him, as it is he, *who worketh in us to will and to do*;—and if you earnestly endeavour to perform this, you shall *find life, and obtain favour of the Lord*;*—if not, but that you have a mind to defer it till another time,—then you are in danger of never being called, but to die in your sins,—or that you wilfully should reject Christ's demand and invitation; then you are *neglecters of the great salvation, treading under foot the blood of the covenant,—enemies of Christ and the gospel*, resembling that stubborn Israel, who would not come to Christ, that they might have life, and therefore by a just judgment of God have been cast out, and excluded from his communion, which certainly without leaving your sinful life, turning to God, and believing in Christ, will also befall you. —Well then, since the Lord calls you still, and the door of mercy is not shut, don't any longer neglect that great privilege, but *repent, repent in dust and ashes*, fly by faith, to Christ and let it be your greatest delight to walk with the deepest humility

* Prov. viii. 35.

humility and holy reverence in the light of Jehovah's countenance:—Thus you will avoid everlasting mourning, and be exalted forever.

But before I conclude I must also direct my address to you, ye saints of the Lord, whose heart through free and undeserved grace and mercy, with such an awful and striking voice has been affected—that ye hearing God by the hearing of the ear, with a due attention and lively conviction, did awake from your fast and deadly sleep of sin and carelessness, and by a divinely enlightened eye, saw him with such a lively apprehension in the brightness of his glorious perfections, as if he stood before you;—and for which sin did appear hateful and abominable to you, seeing it, so contrary to all that is in God, to his holiness, to his glory, to his justice and to his grace; crying out with the true penitent, “ O wretch that I am, that I should ever have indulged iniquity, that I should ever have borne with such an infinite evil in my heart, that I should ever take delight in such mischief against God ;” now I hate and *abhor myself* because of sin, and *repent in dust and ashes*, *O that my heart were waters*, and *my eyes a fountain of tears*, that I might weep day and night, because I have
been

been such a sinner so long, and because I am so much a sinner still;—rejoice ye humble Christians in God's free and superabundant loving kindness bestowed upon you. Sing praises unto God, sing praises for that divine light, first shining forth into your dark and ignorant souls, by which you sensibly saw God in his infinite amiableness and excellency,--- yourselves in your nothingness, unworthiness and odiousness, loathing yourselves in your own sight for all your iniquities and abominations, with a mourning sense for, and striking view of their nature, being so contrary to a most holy God; with hearty wishes that ye had never committed them, and with sincere vows and intentions, by the grace of God, to forsake them all for the future,—— who after receiving a lively apprehension of God's greatness, and faith in Christ, have manifested your greatest delight to live in conformity to all his moral perfections, to love and fear, to honour and obey the eternal God, that made and redeemed you in the blessed Jesus;—arise and lift up yourselves out of the dust, remove the sackcloth and ashes,—take away the mourning vail, stop all your brackish tears, and receive from your Redeemer, *beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,*

mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, for he (who said that he was sent to bind up the broken hearted) is your God and Saviour, to those he will look, those he will raise up and exalt.—He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.—Be it not to the acquisition of honour, dignity and superiority above others, in this world, (which advantages and the like temporal blessings without real virtue, are nothing but mere vanity, and on our death-bed of no value, nor affording any happiness at all) it will certainly be in the world to come, when that cheering promise will be completely accomplished;—then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name; and they shall be mine saith the Lord of Hosts in that day,† &c. and when the chief shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away,‡—to which compare that fine beautiful passage in the little apocryphal book, intitled the wisdom of Solomon:§—And being in its substance agreeable to the word*
of

* Ps. cxiii. 7, 8. † Mal. iii. 16, 17. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 4. § Chap. v. 1, 5.

of God, may also tend to the comfort of those, that are destitute of so great a pomp, grandeur and respect in this world;—then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours,—when they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for, and they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had sometime in derision, and a proverb of reproach;—we fools accounted his life needless, and his end to be without honour;—how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints.—O! what a great consolation ought this to be to those who are in meaner posts of life, and of no repute in this world, yet a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,* &c.—And what a great excitement to those who enjoy the upper station in it, to surpass their inferiors in real virtue or piety here, that they may not be put in a far better and more glorious state above them hereafter,—as also a warning to many despisers, oppressors and persecutors of the faithful of the Lord, to forsake their malicious temper, and shew their humanity, love,

* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

love, and condescension to their fellow-men. Come my friends, of whatever rank you are, let your quality and station correspond with virtue and piety, as the intrinsic worth and value of it ;—and you whose delight it is to practise it,—live nigh to the Lord and endeavour to keep his favour, continually pursuing and desiring a closer walk with him, for nothing can be better for a Christian, than a near approach to the divine presence, whereby he seriously and attentively can reflect upon and glorify his beautiful excellencies, receive his blessed communications, to maintain a spiritual life, walk in the light of his countenance, and rejoice in his name all the day.—O sweet and blessed nearness to so amiable a being ! here the believer sees his God, as it were before his eyes, or to make a little use of the words of an expert divine, here he has “ something of such a spiritual sense of the presence of God, as he shall have when his soul will be dismissed from the prison of its flesh and see him face to face, tho’ in a far less degree,” and but *rara hora brevis mora*, a rare hour, a short continuance. Here he “ knows in some measure what heaven is, beholding several of God’s glories displayed there.”

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He sees him " in his divinity, as self-sufficient, and the first of beings," yea as the " ocean of the unmeasurable fountain of being and perfection and blessedness; and the soul in a due exercise of grace shrinks as it were into nothing before," and in comparison of him.

It sees him " in the glory of his all-sufficiency, as the Almighty Creator, giving birth and life and being to all things; and the soul in a due exercise of grace stands before him as a dependent creature receiving all its powers and being from, and is supported every moment by him."

It sees him " as the supreme of Beings, owns his just sovereignty, and subjects itself afresh and forever, to his high dominion." Now the saint beholding him in the glory of his infinite supremacy, he will not be any more restive and stubborn, nor " quarrel with God because of difficult duties imposed upon him, and because of the afflictive dispensations he was made to pass through ;"—no, no, " but now beholding the Lord so infinitely his superior, he submits to all his will, as counting it fit and just he should be a sovereign and himself a subject,—he gives himself to God afresh and forever, that he may dispose of him accord-

ing to his own will, and for his own glory." Moreover, when a soul draws near to the divine Majesty, it sees him in his holiness, and is forced to cry out "with those worshipping Seraphims," *holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory*, and joins with Isaiah in that humble language,—*wo is me, for I am a man of unclean lips.*

It beholds him "in his infinite and inflexible justice," and says, *righteous art thou O Lord! and upright are thy judgments; if thou O Lord shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord! who would stand?*—As also in his mercy, the divinely enlightened soul, finds him as sitting upon a throne of grace; "there it beholds him with millions of pardons for vile transgressors, and with abundant favour for rebels;"—it views "there, riches and raiment for the poor, the needy, and the naked, and help for the weak believer;"—this causes the soul to wrestle and plead as Jacob did, when he came near to God;—*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,**—upon which it will taste some special loving kindness, which is *better than life*, and therefore the soul will be full of praise; nay here the Lord will make the believer sensible of the forgiveness of his sins, assure him of that mutual

* Gen. xxxiii. 22.

mutual relation between God and him ;
 —speaking to his soul in his own divine
 language, *Son or daughter be of good cheer,
 thy sins are forgiven thee ; I am your God and
 ye are my people,* “ and the saint learns
 then more of this sacred sensation of the
 love of God in one hour, than years of
 cold and common devotions would teach
 him.”——Behold ye humble mourning
 Christians, these and the like are the ele-
 vated enjoyments with which the soul
 is favoured, when it draws near to the
 divine presence! O! who would not long
 for it, and to live always in the sight of
 the Lord, in a *nearness to God, everlasting
 and uninterrupted*; where the soul is detained
 with overpowering delight, this being
 joy above all other joys, pleasure far
 transcending all the pleasures of the intel-
 lectual world, that are not divine and
 holy?—Come, my dear Christian friends!
 will ye enjoy these divine pleasures, and
 attain to such a particular favour?——
 Endeavour to maintain a constant and
 humble correspondence with heaven;—
 draw near to the mercy seat of God in
 prayer, for *he that asketh not, shall not
 receive*; or if he *receive*, it is not in God's
 favour,—but to *him that asketh shall be given,
 he that seeketh shall find*; *—and the Lord
 will

* Matt. vii. 7, 8:

will not bestow farther blessings and graces upon his children after their first and new birth, or his implanting a principle of holiness into their souls, unless he is asked for it, this being an antidote against all retardations and relentings in seeking and adoring the great and glorious God ;—not that you should think our “ prayers to be the procuring cause, or the merit for which God bestows more grace ; no, they do not move him to do it by way of desert, but he hath appointed them as the way in which for Christ’s sake, we may expect it, and so are all his ordinances the means he makes use of in conveying it ;”—therefore pray, nay pray incessantly, let it be your chief business, and expel all kinds of unbelief:—Behold the Lord in his all-sufficiency and infinite *mercy*, as well as *justice and holiness* ; be assured that *he forgives, and does and gives to every man according to his ways, whose heart he knows ;**—That *he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ;†*—That *he is good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon him ;‡*—That *he waits to be gracious unto you, and will be exalted that he may have mercy upon you ;§*—And that all the promises made to you in

* 1 Kings, viii. 39. † Eph. iii. 20. ‡ Ps. lxxxvi. 5. § Isaiah xxx. 18.

in his word, will be accomplished in due season.—*Open thy mouth but wide, and he will fill it,**—and look but continually unto Christ's perfect obedience and sufficient merits,—for which alone our prayers can and will be accepted and heard by the Father;—for *whatsoever ye shall ask in his name, that will he do:†*—Therefore pray, and wrestle with God in Christ's name, for renewed pardon, and new supplies of enlightening, strengthening and quickening grace, to be more and more delivered from sin, to make proficiency in holiness, *daily cleansing yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;‡*—for *with the pure he will shew himself pure, but with the froward he will shew himself froward or unsavoury.§*—And *he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, shall stand in his holy place.¶*—Hence it likewise appears, how necessary it is to be daily repenting, confessing and lamenting your sins before God, that you may never have so much as the sins of one day, unrepented of;—daily striving at perfection, that the inward man may be renewed day by day,|| to be led from grace to grace, from faith to faith, from strength to strength, till you arrive where
our

* Ps. lxxxi. 10. † John xiv. 13, 14. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. § Ps. xviii. 26.
¶ Ps. xxiv. 4. || 2 Cor. iv.

our faith and repentance will be turned into vision, to see God face to face, in the glory of all his moral perfections, in the brightness of very divinity, with supreme and perfect delight, with joy and transport, amongst angels and faints! —which God grant unto all them that love his appearing. Amen.

E R R A T A.

Which it is hoped the reader will be kind enough to correct.

Page 16, line 18, *for of read or.* P. 59, l. 2, *that, r. thus.* P. 85, l. 4, *from the bottom, r. against being.* P. 100, l. 11, *intrinsical, r. extrinsical.* P. 187, l. 3, *yea, r. he.* P. 190, l. 10, *from the bottom, the hearing, r. by the hearing.* —Leffer mistakes are left to the candour of the intelligent.

18 JY 64

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